

The University of Chicago

AMERICAN LITERARY HISTORY
BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF
THE HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

1933

By

ERNEST CHRISTOPHER HASSOLD

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to see what light an examination of the pictures formed in the American mind before the Civil War of its own creative activity in literature, may shed upon the history of American literature and upon the American mind. There is in this period not one first rate literary historian (such as Moses Coit Tyler in the next), but there is a definite movement towards making a record of the national literature, culminating in the Duyckinck Cyclopaedia of American Literature (1856). Leading up to this monument to the early eager search for America's literary treasures, there is an increasing number of pioneer surveys and collections of American literature, and there is, besides, a quite considerable, often controversial discussion of the problems inherent in literary development in the United States, a discussion which, in the absence of critical historians, takes the place of historical interpretation.

The movement towards a history of the national literature is best seen against a background of regional and intellectual viewpoints. The regional groundwork has this pattern: the West, in striving for literary independence from the East, and the South, in striving for independence from the North, are beginning to do on a sectional scale, what the East is undertaking to do on a national scale: making a record, as impressive as possible, of their literary achievements. The nationalistic literary historian inescapably faces opposition from two sources: from critics of superior culture and from jealous champions of neglected sections.

The intellectual background turns on the theories of literary development current at the time. There are five of these: (1) the theory of the beneficent influence of free institutions on literary development, (2) the theory of the rise and decline of literary culture, as the imagination recedes before the advance of reason, (3) the theory of indefinite social progress, including indefinite literary progress, (4) the theory that international traffic, and (5) the opposite theory that national isolation is most conducive to literary development.

Against this background, the successive pioneer contributions towards American literary history exhibit a sharp change in the American mind, from the apologetic colonialism of the early eighteen twenties to a triumphant nationalism in the eighteen fifties. The central figure in precipitating the change is Rufus Wilmot Griswold.

The defensive colonialism of the eighteen twenties is illustrated by the sketches of American literature by John Neal and by James Fenimore Cooper. John Neal's shirtsleeve dictionary of "American Writers" in Blackwood's (1824-1825) was an attempt to "sell" American literature to England and thus to the United States; similarly Cooper's letter on American literature in his Notions of the Americans (London, 1828) was addressed primarily to the mother country. Both of these sketches are tinged with patriotic faith in the future of American literature.

The first historians to publish books on American literature appeared in 1829: Samuel Lorenzo Knapp, Lectures on American Literature (New York), and Samuel Kettell, who edited three volumes of Specimens of American Poetry (Boston). Both profess ardent literary patriotism. Knapp is an enthusiast whose book is utterly unbalanced, but still has something fresh and first hand

about it. Kettell is a hack-writer for the publisher S.G. Goodrich ("Peter Parley"). Both make extravagant claims for American literature.

This rising nationalism of the late eighteen twenties, more or less encouraged by the North American Review, was nipped in the bud by Robert Walsh and a Southern reviewer. Walsh was editor of the American Quarterly Review at Philadelphia and himself an ardent promoter of a national literature. But in Kettell's Specimens he saw nothing but aid and comfort for the enemies of America. His review in the American Quarterly for September 1829 was hard and just; according to Goodrich it killed the book.

A critic no less capable or cruel attacked both Knapp and Kettell in the Southern Review for August 1831. For ten years no historical treatment of American literature on the order of Knapp and Kettell appeared in book form. But Robert Walsh and the Southern reviewer were waging a losing fight. In 1829 Walsh might still ruin Kettell. But in 1842 Kettell would be reincarnated in Griswold and against Griswold Poe and Lowell would fight in vain.

DUNLAP TO GRISWOLD

Meanwhile American literary history continued to be written. In 1832 appeared the history of the American theater which Kettell had announced.¹ The author had been dramatist, critic and manager in New York² and could say of himself, "the writer of this volume alone possessed much of the information it contained."³ This does not mean that he had not turned to other sources for information. He had made use of the New York Historical Society Library, of the assistance of William B. Wood, James K. Paulding, John Inman, Doctors Hosack and Francis, and of the researches of Elias Hicks into the early history of the theater in America;⁴ he had written to dramatists for information about themselves and their work, as the letters from Barker and Noah show.⁵ Nevertheless, the quotation reveals the essential nature and value of William Dunlap's book. He liked to think of himself as an historian;⁶ but what he wrote is not really a history of the American theater, but his memoirs. The heart of it is derived from his diaries,⁷ which are at times directly copied into the

¹ William Dunlap, A History of the American Theatre, Harper, New York, 1832.

² See O.S. Coad, William Dunlap...1917 and "The Dunlap Diaries at Yale" Studies in Philology 24 (1927) 403-12. T.S. Woolsey in the Yale Review, July, 1914, and Mary R. Bowman in Studies in Philology 24 (1927) 413-25.

³ American Theatre, p. 403.

⁴ Preface, p. vii.

⁵ Pp. 376-84.

⁶ Pp. 2, 65 f., 69, 74, 87, 95 f., 403, 404.

⁷ Four of these diaries are in the library of the New York Historical Society. These were accessible to Professor Coad when he wrote his life of Dunlap. Six more, now in the Yale library, he has analyzed since; see Studies in Philology 24 (1927), 403-12. Professor Coad hopes more of the thirty-odd volumes of Dunlap's diaries may turn up. Ibid.

text.⁸ The tone of it is that of reminiscences, rambling, gossipy, detailed, the more readable for Dunlap's interest in character and anecdotage and his ability to tell a story. It is invaluable as a source book.

The structure of the book is anything but sharply defined. Dunlap aimed to begin at the beginning of dramatic performances in America, to tell the story of the spread of the theater and of the rise and growth of native drama,⁹ and to stop in 1810 with the arrival of the celebrated English actor, George Frederick Cooke, a life of whom he had published previously.¹⁰ Actually, he began in England, was wrong about the first performance in America, stuck too closely to the Atlantic seaboard, and there gave a disproportionate amount of space to New York, told more about himself (however modestly), his friends, his troubles as a manager, and of the actors and actresses he had known than about American drama and dramatists, and finally, after Cooke's arrival, drifted into twenty pages of recollections and reflections. He listed in an appendix a hundred native dramatists and about two hundred pieces (including translations and adaptations). "We have seen it flourish in vigour," he says of the native drama, "and put forth branches in every direction."¹¹

⁸ E.g. pp. 168-70. From the time of Dunlap's entrance into the history, (p. 77) the story is more detailed. A brief autobiography is written into the book, pp. 232-47. Cp. the account of his literary circle, pp. 156 f.

⁹ "We have endeavored to trace the growth of the drama in our country from the time the shoot was planted in the soil to the maturity of the tree." American Theatre, p. 404. Cp. p. 403: "When we speak of the theatre of America, we mean the drama of the country," not the playhouses. Dunlap often forgot himself. He was planning to tell more about the spread of the drama in the West in a future work. p. 374.

¹⁰ Memoirs of George Frederick Cooke, Esq., Late of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, 2 vols., 1813. Cooper, the manager, who had brought Cooke over for a tour late in 1810, had intrusted the dissipated actor to his abstemious assistant, manager Dunlap, who kept a diary and shortly after Cooke's death wrote the Memoirs. See DAB art. Dunlap by O.S. Coad.

¹¹ P. 404.

The real aim of Dunlap's book, beyond the pleasure of publishing his reminiscences, is indicated by the mottoes on the title page.¹² It is a defence of the drama, a defence that turns both ways: against the opponents of the theater, and against the actors and actresses whose conduct gives the theater an evil reputation.¹³ The theater is an engine for evil or for good. The progress or retrogression of a civilization is marked by its amusements. "If the wise and the good frequent the theatre, its exhibitions must become schools of wisdom. The lessons taught must be those of patriotism, virtue, morality, religion."¹⁴ He laughs at the ardour of his younger days when he marched with the Philological Society, carrying through the streets of New York a book inscribed "The Federal Language";¹⁵ but he still believes that America needs a national drama, i.e., in Paulding's words, "one appealing directly to the national feeling",¹⁶ and that the government, or else wealthy, enlightened individuals, should patronize it.¹⁷

Dunlap's history reflected the outlook of an older generation.¹⁸ So did the sketch of American Literature that appeared in the Americanization of the seventh edition of Brockhaus' Konversations-Lexikon.¹⁹ The article is a dry, encyclopaedic

¹² "Where's that palace where into sometimes
Foul things intrude not?"

"The corruption of the Theatre is no disproof of its innate and primitive utility."

¹³ See p. 95 f. Cp. pp. 207-9, the story of the Gardies.

¹⁴ P. 67. The ideal drama would have been produced, had England been far enough advanced at the time of the Commonwealth to let Milton write for and direct a theater. Ibid.

¹⁵ P. 87.

¹⁶ P. 86. Quotes Paulding's article on national drama in the second number of the AQR. (This I have not seen).

¹⁷ P. 69. Cp. Appendix pp. 411-20. Regulations of the Theatre Francaise.

¹⁸ The generation of C.B. Brown, Elihu H. Smith, Noah Webster, Samuel L. Mitchill. Dunlap was 66 when his history appeared.

¹⁹ Encyclopaedia Americana based on the seventh edition of the German Konversations-Lexikon XII (1835) [c. 1832], 455-66,

survey of the product of the printing press in the United States. There are twelve sections: newspapers, periodicals, publications of learned societies, theological writings, law, medicine, theater, romantic fiction, arts and science, poetry, history and biography, miscellaneous. There is no mention of Knapp's Lectures or of Kettell's Specimens (or of John Neal's Blackwood's articles for that matter). Dunlap's History is mentioned as recently published. "In general, however, the American theatre has been supplied with plays from the English theatre."²⁰ At the end of the section dealing with Romantic Fiction, the writer says, "For the preceding account of literature in the United States we are indebted to the manuscripts of Professor Ticknor,"²¹ which together with the collection of scarce early writers mentioned by Kettell, suggests that Ticknor may have had in mind to write a sketch of American literature.

The writer of the encyclopaedia article does not share the enthusiasm of Kettell or the New York Mirror for contemporary American poetry; on the contrary, he offers an intelligent explanation of the feebleness of the poets.

More recently the poems of Allston, Pierpont, Paulding, Sands, Hillhouse, Percival, Halleck, Wilcox, Brainard, Bryant, Dana, Sprague, Willis, and others have enjoyed different degrees of popularity in their own country. Independently of other circumstances which operated more powerfully, indeed, at an earlier period, but which still continue to operate with great force, the superior popularity of some of the forms of prose fiction at the pre-

¹⁹ [cont.] art. "United States (Literature)". The Encyclopaedia advertised on the title page, apparently as the outstanding original contribution, the American biographies. These according to Timothy Flint (London Athenaeum 1835) were by Robert Walsh, the one of Joel Barlow by Giulian C. Verplanck. The article on Literature might be by Walsh to judge by its style and tone (preference for biography, disdain for romantic fiction, distaste for American poetry, especially colonial), but I know of no external evidence.

²⁰ P. 462.

²¹ This could refer to the eight preceding sections, but probably refers only to the one on romantic fiction.

sent day may partly account for the poverty of the Americans in this department.²²

Less conservative is the outlook of two serial sketches that appeared in the London Athenaeum in 1835, both by Americans. A series by Timothy Flint of Cincinnati had been announced in connection with a general survey of "European Literature in the Nineteenth Century." But in January 1835 a stopgap had to be substituted for Flint's series,²³ which appeared from July 4th to November 7th.

²² Ibid. He is even harder on the contemporary poets than Joseph Snelling, who published an anti-Annual in Boston in 1831, The Truth: A New Year's Gift for Scribblers, which opened:

"Moths, millers, gnats, and butterflies I sing;
Far-darting Phoebus, lend my strain a sting,
Much courted virgins, long-enduring Nine,
Screw tight the catgut of this lyre of mine:
If D-na, D-wes, and P--rp-nt ask your aid,
If W-ll-s takes to writing as a trade,
If L-nt and F-mn to Pindus' top aspire,
I too may blameless beg one spark of fire;
Not such as warmed the brains of Pope and Swift--
With less assistance I can make a shift:
To Gifford's bow and shafts I lay no claim--
He shot at hawks, but I at insects aim...."

His attack includes the "upstart Whittier" and nearly everybody except Halleck, whom he addresses:

"While Mirror M-rr-s chants in whimpering note
And croaking D-na strains his screech-owl throat;
While crazy N-al to meter shakes his chains,
And fools are found to listen to his strains;
While childish Natty P. the public diddles,
And L-nt and R-ckw-ll scrape his second fiddles,
While Brooks and Sands, and Smith and either Clark,
In chase of Phoebus, howl, and yelp, and bark--
Wilt thou be silent? Wake, O Halleck, wake!"

According to Goodrich, Willis replied contemptuously, but effectively, in some half-dozen lines inserted in the Statesman, and addressed to Smelling Joseph; the sobriquet, he suspects, drove Snelling to drink and degradation. S.G. Goodrich, Recollections, II, 265 n. Marryat warmed up Smelling Joseph to annoy Willis in 1836. See H.A. Beers, Nathaniel Parker Willis (1885), 198 f.

²³ Through no fault of Flint's. He had been suggested to the Athenaeum by its New York agents, Peabody & Co., publishers of the Knickerbocker, (with which Flint was connected as editor in 1833), and an advance on the series had been asked. The Athenaeum sent £20, some of which Peabody returned after his company had failed. Peabody had mentioned the series to Flint, but made no definite arrangements. The Athenaeum at no time put the blame on Flint. See Athenaeum 1835, p. 12. Cp. John E. Kirkpatrick, Timothy Flint, (1911) pp. 230 f.

Before I learned that N.P. Willis was the author of the stopgap series,²⁴ I had supposed, because of the personal descriptions of W.E. Channing, Percival, and Edward Everett,²⁵ that it was written by a woman. The series is interesting mainly because it shows, as Willis' biographer has said, what was in the air.²⁶ The writer comments on the inadequacy of American reviews for light on American literature,²⁷ and indicates his own equipment: the reading of two hundred poets and seventy-two prose writers²⁸ and personal acquaintance with America. He writes as an Englishman.²⁹

The older writers he skips over lightly, dismissing Barlow's Columbiad and Phyllis Wheatley as well left to their fate; and the distinguished older political and religious writers as not within the range of interest of the general reader. He loses no time over such established figures as C.B. Brown or Irving. He places William Wirt with Brown. Cooper is "the first author and best citizen of their republic"; Miss Sedgwick's heroines are "not surpassed in the literature of the language."³⁰ Paulding's nationalism is noted, but not particularly approved. The Southern Review is considered the cleverest of the three reviews. The Western country is surveyed: Flint is "really a man of talent."

²⁴ Athenaeum, 1835, pp. 9-13, 52-5, 105-7, 147-50 (Jan. 3, 17; Feb. 7, 21.)

²⁵ Lady Byron, a Unitarian, was attracted to W.E. Channing by this sketch. See. H.A. Beers, op. cit., p. 164.

²⁶ Beers, ibid.

²⁷ He can recall no respectable paper on Cooper in NAR nor a fair criticism of him in Walsh's or Legaré's, nor in one of the monthlies, Athenaeum, 1835, p. 9.

²⁸ Presumably in anthologies. The 72 prose writers probably refers to Cheever's Commonplace Book of American Prose (1828). There are nearly two hundred poets in Kettell. Cp. the reference to Kettell, p. 149.

²⁹ "We hope to convince English readers at least...that there is a mine of prose, poetry, and dramatic writing in that country which deserves better than to have been first unearthed by foreign criticism."

³⁰ P. 9.

The periodicals the country over bring out, while they last, a great deal of clever writing.³¹ He surveys the drama: Hillhouse's closet drama, Dunlap, J.H. Paine, Bird, Barker, McHenry ("his plays have travelled far--on trunk covers"); and notes the beginnings of a purely American drama by the introduction of Indian characters and the half-horse-half-alligator men of the West; but he adds that there is less talent for dramatic writing in America than for any other kind of literature.³² Webster and Edward Everett are treated at length, the latter "perhaps altogether the most accomplished man that has ever risen in America."³³ Of the poets, Bryant has written the best things, but Percival and Dana are both far superior. Percival looks the part of a poet.³⁴ Willis quotes at length from Drake's "Culprit Fay". Fitz Greene Halleck, he thinks, is "most likely to write the first sustained great poem in America."³⁵

The trouble with American literature according to Willis is the lack of appreciative American criticism. Cooper is a case in point. "The Americans do not deserve such an author--judging by the press alone."³⁶ American books are read in America if stamped by English approbation. "With a superflu of national vanity, America is strangely deficient in national pride."³⁷ What he appreciates in American literature is its pure and healthy moral feeling; its affectionateness, taking after Mrs. Hemans rather than after the morbid misanthropy of Byron.³⁸ As for the charges of lack of originality and of fresh enthusiasm for nature,

³¹ P. 12. Note the interest in fugitive writing. Cp. Flint, infra, p. 65, n. 46. Also p. 69 and n. 68.

³² P. 13.

³³ Pp. 52-4; 10.

³⁴ Pp. 54-5.

³⁵ Pp. 105-7.

³⁶ P. 11.

³⁷ P. 9.

³⁸ P. 149.

it must be remembered that the Americans have not had time to find themselves, and that poetry is a child of civilization; the pioneer and hunter think upon what they shall dine and where they shall sleep.³⁹ No other country in the world is so undramatic, so morally healthy.⁴⁰ Some day--but not soon--nature on its grand scale in America, the republic in its grand frame will give a character to its literature. Leisure, surplus population, excessive refinement and great political quiet are required for a literary era. "They will arrive in their proper time, and then there will be a new day in literature, unlike all that has gone before and, for obvious reasons"--he concludes rather cryptically, "unlike all that can come after it."⁴¹

Flint's series is superior and, to me, far more interesting.⁴² Flint had seen America and its literature from the viewpoints of New England, the West, and New York.⁴³ In his sketch as it stands with the treatment of the more prominent writers covered by Willis cut out,⁴⁴ sociological analysis predominates over literary history, and what there is left of the latter deals largely with secondary materials. But fragmentary as it is, I

³⁹ Pp. 149 f.

⁴⁰ "No country in the world whose whole character, history and feelings are so stripped of dramatic ornament...The world--their world is a workshop...France, on the contrary is a daily serio-comedy. Their police reports read like accounts of new plays...We congratulate America upon the difference." P. 13.

⁴¹ P. 150.

⁴² To H.A. Beers it seemed unreadable. *Op. cit.* p. 217.

⁴³ Flint had been editor of Knickerbocker's the latter part of 1833.

⁴⁴ See Athenaeum 1835 (Oct. 24), 802, 819. The editor cuts Flint's comment on Brown, Irving, Cooper, Paulding, Miss Sedgwick, Bryant, Dana, Percival and all the more prominent living writers. Flint's criticism upon the story tellers would have been interesting. It seems to be lost for good. His cousin James Flint was going to edit Flint's writings from his manuscripts, but J.E. Kirkpatrick searched for them in vain and concluded they were destroyed when the Flint house burned down during the Civil War. See his Timothy Flint, pp. 312 f. Flint's sketch, like Neal's, was written from memory. See Athenaeum, 1835, p. 819.

can think of no other sketch of American literature written by an American before the Civil War that has more to say, or is more balanced, sane and understanding.

Flint's view of American literature, on the surface, is like Willis'--the Knickerbocker attitude. But there is Western spirit and experience, and at the same time a native Easterner's critical aloofness from the rawness of the West in it. Poetry comes last in the intellectual development of modern times.⁴⁵ American poetry so far is largely fugitive.⁴⁶ The language in the United States is pure (the Americans talk too much);⁴⁷ there is remarkable aptitude for poetry and painting.⁴⁸ But America has heavy handicaps: lack of compulsion to create a language and literature of its own; competition with English authors;⁴⁹ lack of a national metropolis; half-baked criticism by half-baked critics;⁵⁰ absorption of literary talent in political electioneering; and--this last not only in America but in the whole civilized world--"the tendency of the age to merge the individual power

⁴⁵ Cp. Willis, supra, p. 64.

⁴⁶ Pp. 625: "These well-known wandering stars are the most remarkable feature of American periodicals." Cp. p. 818: "...a volume could easily be collected of these transient efforts, resulting in well-written essays, effusions of poetry, and displays of beautiful and eloquent writing, which gleam like shooting stars athwart, perhaps, the dingy columns of some remote interior papers...." P. 819. Speaking of "the extraordinary American development of a propensity for fugitive poetry" which began quite early: "It would not be an easy task to rescue from oblivion these hundreds of names of votaries of the Muse, who have perished with their works from memory."

⁴⁷ P. 511. The American talks as much, Flint says, as the Englishman supposes him to spit. The purity of the language he accounts for by the American attention to grammar and public speaking.

⁴⁸ P. 783. The same aptitude, he says, has been noticed in Mexico and South America.

⁴⁹ There are more persons in the United States, he says, than anywhere else in proportion to the population, who have appeared in print, but fewer writers by profession. P. 624.

⁵⁰ Cp. E.S. Gould, "American Criticism on American Literature" Literary and Theological Review 3 (Mar. 1836) 33-50, and Poe's attitude in the Southern Literary Messenger.

and feeling in the iron and nerveless strength of corporation."⁵¹ Against all these obstacles, considering that American literature is only about forty years old, the United States have done remarkably well.

What we have actually produced, is just such as should have been by a nation of illimitable literary ambition and resources, unencouraged and wanting scope and compensation; that is, innumerable efforts in omne scibile, literary projects of every conceivable character, more literary papers than England herself; innumerable magniloquent orations, thousands of literary essays, countless numbers of poets, finding relief for their "fine frenzy" in the poet's corner of the gazette; in a word, snatches of thought produced between showers of business; the germs of epics, which still remain in the brains of the writers, and which would exist developed, had they scope and encouragement; works commenced and abandoned, as ought to happen where everybody thinks himself capable of being a writer...until he finds that writing costs time, is not always praised, wears upon the brain, disqualifies for other pursuits, and is not, after all, the employment of those fortunate people who gain money and distinction.⁵²

After his sociological analysis, Flint gives a brief history of American literature, in three periods: immigrant, native, national. In the first he is interested in the influence of America on the minds and style of the English emigrants,⁵³ and in the influence of the Virginia cavalier with his classics and of the Massachusetts Puritan with his Bible in moulding the whole colonial character and literature.⁵⁴ In the next epoch, the first "purely and properly American" colonials were an inferior race,

⁵¹ Pp. 584-6.

⁵² P. 625.

⁵³ The Americanization of literature, according to Flint, began at once with these emigrants who wrote really English literature, but modified by experiences in a new and unexplored world, on the margin of an illimitable wilderness. "Their style is more hurried, compressed, simple, graphic, than probably it would have been had they only written at ease in their native parlours..." P. 667.

⁵⁴ Flint tried to understand the Massachusetts imagination. "Ranging dark, sterile, unexplored forests, it was natural for such imaginations [as fed on the Bible] to expatiate in fictions of diabolical enginery....They gave [the devil] agents, and to enable him to exercise a sort of delegated ubiquity, they had the terrible poetical machinery of witches..." Ibid.

a bigoted lot, of wretched taste, the writers mostly ministers,⁵⁵ followed by a race of lawyers and statesmen. With the approaching revolution came a passion for politics, windy and wordy discussions of governments and laws, ministers thundering Liberty from the pulpits. He quotes Lord Chatham's tribute to the American state papers; he suggests a history of orators of the Revolution.⁵⁶ After the Revolution--chaos, and then "with the return of law and order, commerce and industry, plenty and tranquillity, the distinct elements of the composition of our character began to glimmer into development."⁵⁷ These elements are fourfold: (1) oratory, an escape valve for the gas of human vanity;⁵⁸ (2) sermons, theology and controversy, with an ample share of the odium theologicum;⁵⁹ (3) sciences and arts;⁶⁰ (4) literature proper.⁶¹ The omission from this last part of Flint's sketch of his comment on the best poets and prose fiction writers, leaves but a scattered account of miscellaneous writers of psychology, history, biography, reviews and poets. He pays a tribute to Robert Walsh, "the acknowledged patriarch of American literature";⁶² praises his contributions to American biography in the Encyclopaedia Americana,⁶³ but cannot understand why Walsh puts up with such a co-editor on the American

⁵⁵ P. 667. Cotton Mather's Magnolia is the example cited of their creed of diablerie and particular providence.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ P. 668.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Flint notes three distinct styles of oratory: (1) the northern: note-taking, memorizing, more inhibited, accustomed to a churchgoing audience criticising sermon; (2) the southern, with greater volume and exertion of voice and easy bearing; (3) the mixed.

⁵⁹ Pp. 714-16. He gives a readable sketch of American sects and theological writers from Jonathan Edwards down to the Christian Examiner.

⁶⁰ Pp. 782 f.

⁶¹ Pp. 802-3, 817-19.

⁶² P. 818.

⁶³ P. 803.

Quarterly as McHenry.⁶⁴ Of poetry he declares, after running through the older poets from Roger Williams down to Barlow and Paine, that in addition to the more than 200 names known to the public at least 200 more are anonymous.⁶⁵ The "stamp of purity and piety" is there.⁶⁶ His conclusion sounds the fourth of July note he has been careful to avoid in the beginning: America does not want genius; her bad traits are a second edition of England on a folio instead of a duodecimo sheet; given a literary capital, what the United States might do in literature is suggested by the fugitive writing in her newspapers.⁶⁷

Willis and Flint, like Neal, in writing primarily for British readers emphasize the extent of American writing not generally known, even in America. But beyond those quantitative claims two qualitative claims for American literature are made with growing emphasis in the thirties. In the first place, American literature is pure beyond all other literature. The expectation of lofty republican virtue still seen in Dunlap has turned into rather colorless bourgeois morality. "Not a line to raise a blush! May it ever remain so!" echoes and re-echoes in the comment upon American poetry. Moreover, American poetry has by necessity been largely fugitive; now a virtue is made of this necessity. A second irrelevant claim is made for American literature on the basis of the excellence of its fugitive pieces, particularly its

⁶⁴ P. 818. McHenry had condemned Bryant and Willis for imitation of Wordsworth in "American Lake Poetry" AQR 11 (March 1832), 154-74. Two years later in an article on the "Decline of Poetry" AQR 15 (June 1834), 448-73, he complained of the "sterility of literary production" for the last five or six years. Then W.G. Clark who had been included in the attack (with Solyman Brown and others) went for McHenry in an article in Knickerbocker's, 4 (July 1834), 11-24, the echoes of which, he says, drove "the little doctor" out of the country. For a full account of the controversy see Mott, op. cit. 274 f.

⁶⁵ Pp. 818 f.

⁶⁶ P. 819.

⁶⁷ Pp. 831 f.

poetry.⁶⁸ This is supported by a line of anthologies that bridge the gap between Kettell and Griswold. But two minor sketches appearing in 1837 are to be considered first.

The one is called a "History of American Contributions to the English Language and Literature", but consists merely of a series of starred paragraphs inserted in an American edition of Robert Chambers' History of the English Language and Literature.⁶⁹ Beginning with John Winthrop, John Cotton and Thomas Hooker, it catalogues a considerable number of writers in theology, politics, poetry, drama, fiction, history, biography, metaphysics, travels, and miscellaneous writings--with very little comment. The writer, a clergyman,⁷⁰ favors theology and adds to Chambers' lists not only American but English theologians.⁷¹ The work is not important, except as an indication that American literature began to insist on a place, if not of its own, then on the back of English literature.⁷²

⁶⁸ Compare the older attitude. "Magazine poetry has usually been considered as synonymous with the most trivial and imperfect attempts at verse-writing." Thomas Condie in 1798, quoted by Mott, *op. cit.*, p. 46. By 1834 W.G. Clark in Knickerbocker's (4: 11) says: "The fact is as undeniable as it is generally acknowledged, that since the death of Lord Byron, the best fugitive poetry of the United States has been greatly superior to that of England." Willis and Flint would hardly put it so forcibly in the London Athenaeum. By 1848, A.S.P. in SQL 14 (July 1848), 101-31, finds the foundations of a national literature laid in the fugitive poetry of America. The most celebrated rationalization of fugitive poetry is, of course, Poe's theory of poetry.

⁶⁹ Published by Hopkins at Hartford.

⁷⁰ Goodrich mentions the Rev. Royal Robbins among his hack-writers, Recollections, II, 547-9.

⁷¹ E.g. Lightfoot, p. 97; Matthew Henry, p. 136.

⁷² Cp. H.T. Tuckerman's sketch of American literature for Shaw's Manual of English Literature (1852).--Chambers continued to include American literature. With Robert Carruthers, he made a Cyclopaedia of English Literature (the model for the Duyckinck Cyclopaedia) in two volumes, 1842-44, which was brought down to date and reprinted in 1858; this 1858 reprint must be the Handbook of American Literature by Robert Chambers mentioned by Nikolaus Trübner in 1859 (Bibliographical Guide, p. xxx).

The other was a "Discourse on American Literature" delivered by George Tucker, the biographer of Jefferson, before the Lyceum at Charlottesville, Virginia, in December 1837.⁷³ It is a complacent, pragmatic survey. Before the Revolution, thinks Tucker, the American mind was a bit slow, but the Revolution called for "every species of intellectual exertion"; the literary awakening, however, began at the turn of the century when writers at Philadelphia and New York "no longer content to speak to the understandings" also addressed themselves to the imaginations of their countrymen.⁷⁴ Since then "literature has been steadily advancing in the United States", particularly periodical literature.⁷⁵ His view of literature is decidedly democratic.

In the multiplication of our magazines and reviews, our religious journals, our temperance journals; our journals of medicine and law, and agriculture; our railroad and beet sugar, and silk culture journals [sic!]
[sic!]--who does not see that the American mind is awakened to the beauties and benefits of literature, and that what the improved taste of the nation craves, the improved talent of the nation seeks to supply.⁷⁶

While American literature is still far behind that of England, France, and Germany, yet its rise within the past generation is a matter of self-congratulation and bids well for the future, provided Americans will promote education, support lyceums and public libraries, and in every way encourage literature, which deserves it, for next to virtue, literature is best.⁷⁷

⁷³ Reprinted in Southern Literary Messenger 4 (1838) 81-8. In general character, Tucker's Discourse is much like R.J. Ingersoll's Influence of America on the Mind, (1823) or S.L. Mitchell's Discourse (1821)--a statesman's survey.

⁷⁴ Pp. 83 f.

⁷⁵ He cites statistics: In 1775 there were 37 newspapers in the United States, in 1837, 1600; in 1810, 27 journals; in 1834, 130.

⁷⁶ Pp. 85 f. The causes of this awakening and advancement, he finds, are (1) civil liberty and (2) the federative character of our government.

⁷⁷ Pp. 81, 88.

Finally, a word about the anthologies between Kettell and Griswold. Since they are not historical, i.e., contain no accounts of American literature and no biographical and critical notices, this is not the place for a detailed account of them. They are glanced at here merely as background objects.

In 1831, undaunted by, if not ignorant of, the failure of Kettell's Specimens, George B. Cheever, who had edited a Common-place Book of American Prose for Goodrich in 1828, ventured a companion volume of poetry.⁷⁸ It consisted of selections from about 80 writers, and was of a devotional cast.⁷⁹ The flood of annuals during the thirties⁸⁰ seem to have crowded out other American anthologies until 1840, when collections by Morris, Bryant and Keese appeared. George P. Morris compiled American Melodies: Containing a Single Selection from the Production of Two Hundred Writers.⁸¹ Not so all-embracing was Bryant.⁸² He excluded amatory and drinking songs, and pleaded lack of time to collect fugitive pieces from magazines; at that there are, besides

⁷⁸ The American Common Place Book of Poetry, Boston, Carter, Hendee, 1831. The title suited the subject thought F.W.P. Greenwood in the Christian Examiner 12 (Mar. 1832), 91-6: "...what is the whole body of American poetry but a great common place book? There is not a poem worthy of the name in the whole compass and extent of it." Cp. Poe, who thought the title suited the selection, Works (Stedman and Woodberry), VIII, 151.

⁷⁹ "Particularly suitable for the use of colleges, academies and schools", thought A.H. Everett, NAR 35 (1831) 297-324, who rejoiced to find poetry declining in England but beginning to flourish in the United States notwithstanding the noise of active political and industrial life.

⁸⁰ "For nearly twenty years," says Goodrich (Recollections II, 260) "every autumn produced an abundant harvest of Diadems, Bijous, Pearls, Gems, Amethysts, Opals, Amarynth, Bouquets, Hyacinths, Amulets, Talismans, Forget-me-nots, Remember-me's, etc." and adds almost fifty more titles of Annuals and their successors in England and the United States. According to Professor Leisy's bibliography (Studies in Philology, 1926) several studies of the Annuals are forthcoming.

⁸¹ Published by Anners, Philadelphia [c. 1840].

⁸² Selections from the American Poets, New York, Harper, 1840.

the usual run from Freneau down,⁸³ a number of unusual names included among his 80 poets.⁸⁴ Keese's anthology⁸⁵ is more ambitious; he plans "The Anthology of America" a "complete library of the best American poetry".⁸⁶ Keese's two volumes were, however, superseded in 1842 by the far more exhaustive work that had for several years been on the mind of Rufus Wilmot Griswold.

⁸³ Bryant must have changed his mind about Freneau since 1818. He not only includes him, as he does Dwight and Barlow, but represents him with four selections. Jones Very, too, is among the fourteen poets favored with four or more selections.

⁸⁴ E.g., W.J. Snelling (Cp. supra. p. 61), Gallaudet, John H. Bryant, Nehemiah Cleaveland, Elizabeth Park.

⁸⁵ The Poets of America, Illustrated by One of Her Painters, New York, Colman, Vol. I, 1840, Vol. 2, 1842.

⁸⁶ Preface, pp. 6, 7. Most of Keese's 110 poets are contemporaries, represented by from one to three selections; Bryant has nine, Halleck, five.

R.W. GRISWOLD AS LITERARY HISTORIAN

R.W. Griswold put his money into a monument;¹ the irony of his fate is that his memory has become a sort of Absalom's grave, by which hardly anybody passes without heaving another stone.² His after-life is sorry; he figures as a sort of literary gangster in the lives of Poe.³ The achievement that he hoped his name would live by, his contribution to American literary history, is overlooked or ridiculed. His anthologies have come to be regarded as a literary graveyard.⁴

It was not so during his lifetime. Though few perhaps, like Horace Binney Wallace, regarded Griswold as a genius,⁵ yet he was thought of (and perhaps feared) as a literary magnate,⁶ plenipotent with booksellers,⁷ a biographical Warwick--"the setter up and puller down of kings (poetic ones),"⁸ "among the

¹ See J.L. Neu, "Rufus Wilmot Griswold" in University of Texas Bulletin No. 2538 (Studies in English No. 5), October 8, 1925, (pp. 101-65), 155 f.

² Exceptions: (1) Griswold's son, W.M. Griswold who published Passages from the Correspondence of R.W. Griswold, Cambridge, Mass., 1898; (2) Killis Campbell, "The Poe-Griswold Controversy" P.M.L.A. 34 (1919), 436-64; (3) J.L. Neu, op. cit.

³ For example: J.W. Robertson, Edgar A. Poe, a Psychopathic Study, Putnam's, 1923, and Hervey Allen, Israfil, 2 vols., Doran, 1926. Griswold appears as "muscling in" as Poe's editor and biographer; as falsifying Poe's letters to himself and Poe's works; as stealing Poe's copyright from his mother-in-law (Israfil, 894) and as waiting his chance to kill Poe's life-beyond-life. The best they say for him is that he was not the only one in his generation; that, for example, Horace Greeley seems practically to have dictated the "Ludwig" article. (Robertson, 173 f.)

⁴ See Correspondence, p. 130. Barrett Wendell, A Literary History of America (1900), p. 208. George E. Woodberry, The Life of Edgar Allen Poe, (1909), II, 350.

⁵ See Putnam's 7 (May, 1856), 549.

⁶ Correspondence, p. 14.

⁷ P. 175.

⁸ P. 104.

"first and most influential of our authors in cultivating a respect for our literature."⁹ But even then the good opinion was not unanimous. To Horace Greeley, his Vermont neighbor and New York "boss", he seemed a literary cooper;¹⁰ to another contemporary, a literary mouser;¹¹ to Poe and E.A. Duyckinck, a literary humbug and toady;¹² and to Lowell, a goose decked out with other geese's feathers.¹³

"Rufe" or "Gris", as his friends called him, who came from a Vermont farmer's family that was old, poor, pious, and large, went on his own quite young; at fifteen he left school, fell out with his kinsfolk, became a knockabout and newspaperman; at 22 he was married in New York, entered the Baptist ministry, and projected a magazine to be called, characteristically, "The Anthology". He remained a journalist, however, though not without some thought of a naval chaplaincy in 1841, and had only his spare time to work on his anthology, now a book project. His Correspondence, which first mentions the project in 1838, gives a pretty clear picture of how the book was made and launched.¹⁴

To collect materials, Griswold wrote to authors for autobiographical data;¹⁵ perhaps even paid for sketches he needed and

⁹ S.G. Goodrich, op. cit. II, 382. This was a publisher's estimate. Cp. J.T. Field's letter to Griswold, Feb. 3, 1850: "...P.S. The little brevity touching your new Edn. which I put into the Transcript here seems to be travelling about and I read no longer ago than yesterday in a St. Louis paper that 'no man in Am[erica] stands higher at the present time than R.W.G. in public estimation.'" Correspondence, p. 260. Cp. Herman Hooker, an Anglican publisher, to Mrs. Griswold in 1853 (when her husband was ill) "...he has done more important service to Literature and literary men than any other man that lives or has lived in the U.S." Correspondence, p. 291.

¹⁰ Correspondence, p. 105.

¹¹ Putnam's 7 (1856), 105.

¹² See Poe's review of Griswold's Poets in Philadelphia Saturday Museum reprinted in Robertson, op. cit. pp. 243-58; Duyckinck's review of Prose Writers in Literary World for March 20, 1847.

¹³ Fable for Critics (1848)

¹⁴ For the facts in this paragraph see Correspondence, pp. 5-23.

¹⁵ Park Benjamin, Albert Pike, W.G. Simms, F.W. Thomas, R.W. Emerson--Correspondence, pp. 56 f., 71 f., 77, 79, 98 f.

ordered;¹⁶ received additional sketches from candidates and their friends;¹⁷ and some from his friends.¹⁸ A wizard with the scissors, according to Greeley,¹⁹ Griswold rifled the contributions of his predecessors, notably Kettell.²⁰ At that he almost worked himself to death.²¹ He says he had sifted down about five hundred volumes of verse;²² and there is no telling the quantities of criticism he must have absorbed. He was the man for the job, however; he had a flair "for universal knowledge of men and things" says Greeley;²³ knew how to make friends when he wanted to,²⁴ and how to draw out their encouragement, assistance and advice.²⁵ They were enthusiastic about the anthology. It was to be a great book and make Griswold famous.²⁶ It was announced far in advance, and on its appearance could not have been better puffed.²⁷ A senator from his home state once advised Griswold to turn politician. He was one in literature. The launching of his anthology was his great campaign.

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- ¹⁶ Correspondence, 66. F.W. Thomas understood from Poe that Griswold paid "well and promptly" and offered to write, for pay, the sketches of Pinckney, Amelia Welby, Prentice and Mrs. Dinnies. The review in the Philadelphia Saturday Museum says Thomas did write the sketch of Mrs. Welby. Robertson, op. cit. p. 257.
- ¹⁷ Emerson wrote on Jones Very and recommended Thoreau, Correspondence, 98 f. Thomas recommended Flint and Perkins, p. 98.
- ¹⁸ H.J. Raymond wrote the sketch of J.G.C. Brainard; Horace Greeley those of William H. Burleigh, Lydia Sigourney, and Elizabeth Ellett; J.T. Fields tried (unsuccessfully) to find out when certain Bostonians were born: Correspondence, 101, 102, 103.
- ¹⁹ Correspondence, 58.
- ²⁰ Griswold's "Historical Introduction" is condensed from Kettell's Introduction and the first two hundred pages of the Specimens. For details, see Neu, op. cit. pp. 116 f.
- ²¹ See Greeley's letter, Correspondence, p. 103.
- ²² Poets and Poetry (1851) Preface to the Eleventh Edition.
- ²³ Correspondence, p. 105.
- ²⁴ See R. Balmanno's delighted letter to Keese, Correspondence 103.
- ²⁵ See especially Horace Greeley's interest in the anthology; his aid in contributions; his bucking Griswold up, his advising him to have two Appendices, and to print small editions so as to keep the book before the public for the next ten years. Correspondence, passim.
- ²⁶ Horace Greeley, in Correspondence, p. 103.
- ²⁷ Correspondence, 106. Cp. Neu, op. cit. 119.

Griswold won. Times had changed since Kettell's fiasco. Robert Walsh was old now, the old Southern Review was dead; the new one was edited by a Yankee. The Southern Literary Messenger was friendly; Greeley was to do a review for it. Poe, Griswold had befriended. No one would ruin Griswold. Besides, there was more poetry in the United States in 1842 than there had been in 1829, and a good deal more interest in poetry. When the long expected anthology appeared, the Knickerbocker led the applause in April;²⁸ Poe seconded it in Graham's Magazine for May and June;²⁹ the Southern Literary Messenger for May emphasized the importance of the work for literary history--"from no previous work could one-tenth of the information here collected be obtained--not one-fourth of it from all preceding works together."³⁰ A few discordant Southern voices mattered little.³¹ Nor did an annual "annihilation" by some hostile critic.³² The book sold and kept selling in small editions as Greeley had advised: three within the first year. In 1847, when the eighth edition appeared, revised and enlarged, a reviewer in the Weekly Tribune, May 29, 1847, said he had heard of no "rival work in press, nor that there is any publisher rash enough to undertake one. The Poets and Poetry of America are sought and found here or nowhere."³³

²⁸ The reviewer thinks it "one of the most splendid books ever published in the United States." Knickerbocker 19 (April 1842) 394.

²⁹ Poe noticed it in May, "the best of its class", reviewed it in June, "This is the best collection of the American poetry that has yet been made, whether we consider its completeness, its size, or the judgment displayed in its selections." Cp. Poe's review of the third edition in the Boston Miscellany for November, 1842: "...the most important addition which our literature has for many years received." Poe's good opinion did not last, however.

³⁰ Southern Literary Messenger 1 (May 1842), 360.

³¹ Simms in Magnolia; Cp. Correspondence 120. The review in SQR 2 (July 1842), 268-70 objects to (1) neglect of the South-- "The Poets of the Northern States", (2) to "second table".

³² See Literary World, June 5, 1847, quoted *infra*, p. 82, n. 66.

³³ Quoted by Neu, *op. cit.*, 122. As a matter of fact, Wiley and Putnam was rash enough to advance Poe \$50 on his Parnassus,

And in 1851 Griswold could humbly say, "The fact that nine large editions of 'The Poets and Poetry of America' have been sold in seven years from its first publication, is a gratifying evidence of the interest felt in American letters."³⁴

These facts about Griswold and his book are more important than the opinions he expressed in it. He was, that is to say, less of a scholar or critic than a literary log-roller; his chief asset was enthusiasm, his real achievement advertising. The expression of his opinions in the Poets, moreover, is muffled. By temperament Griswold was dogmatic, given to bluntness and superlatives. In the Poets, however, he tried to hold himself in. His expressions are politic. He often seems to halt between two opinions.

For example, he says that colonial poetry in America was practically valueless because the spirit of freedom had not yet begun to mould the national character.³⁵ "The bar to progress was that spirit of bigotry...which prevented the cultivation of elegant learning."³⁶ In the next breath, however, he defends his bigoted ancestors. "Our fathers...planted deep and strong in religious virtue and useful science the foundations of an edifice, not dreaming how great and magnificent it would be."³⁷ That sounds as if a gorgeous temple of American literature were already built. But in his Preface Griswold says, "We have but the beginnings of a national literature,"³⁸ and despite the influence of the spirit of freedom he deplores the persistent "vassalage

³³ [Cont.] apparently intended as a rival anthology. See Poe's letter to E.A. Duyckinck, Nov. 13, 1845, quoted by Hervey Allen, Israfel, 664 f.

³⁴ Poets and Poetry (1851) Preface to the Eleventh Edition. It ran to the thirteenth edition in Griswold's lifetime. (d. 1857) By 1887 there had been twenty editions.

³⁵ "Historical Introduction", p. xxviii. Ctr. his opinion in 1847 of colonial theology, see infra, pp. 87 f. and n. 92.

³⁶ Ibid. p. xvii.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Edition of 1842. "To the Reader".

of opinion and style" of most American writers to England.³⁹ "This book," the Preface proudly opens--a book of nearly five hundred double-column octavo pages--"is designed to exhibit the progress and condition of poetry in the United States."⁴⁰ But the proud note is not sustained; not all of this, he confesses, is really poetry.⁴¹ "It contains selections from a large number of authors"--87 in fact, with biographical and critical introductions, 60 more in an appendix of "Various Authors"--"all of whom have lived in the brief period" since the national government has been established.⁴² But he breaks down again--"with a multitude of verse-writers, we have few poets."⁴³ This was, however, not the point of what Griswold had labored for years to establish. What he really wanted to say--and said more boldly in later editions⁴⁴ was indicated by the mottoes he selected,⁴⁵ viz. that American

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ He says quite naively: "I might have experienced difficulty in filling so large a volume had I been governed by a more strict definition." Ibid. This sentence is later changed.

⁴² "To the Reader".

⁴³ Ibid. This sentence was dropped in the revision of the "Preface to the First Edition."

⁴⁴ A comparison of "To the Reader" in the fourth edition of 1843 with the "Preface to the First Edition" as revised in the eleventh edition (1851) shows this change in emphasis. For example: in 1843 he names twelve "eminent scholars and writers" some of whom have written things "that will keep green their memories for centuries"; in 1851--he has meanwhile edited the Prose Writers (the Female Poets, too, but that makes no difference here)--he names forty all of whom "and many more, in the various departments of Literature have written for the coming ages."

⁴⁵ Compare the motto selected from Bryant

"Here the free spirit of mankind at length

Throws its last fetters off; and who shall place

A limit to the giant's unchained strength?"

with "To the Reader": "There is in all the republic scarcely a native inhabitant of Saxon origin who cannot read or write.

Every house has its book closet and every town its public library...." Also, the motto from C.F. Hoffman

"Ere long, thine every stream shall find a tongue,

Land of the many waters!"

with the American themes for poetry proposed "To the Reader":

"The mountains of New England and the West, the great inland seas," etc. He has a long list of historical themes too.

poetry was manifestly beginning to fulfil its destiny--"Westward the starry path of poesy lies."⁴⁶

Griswold's comments on the individual poets seem muted too. Even here, though, his penchant for superlatives is pronounced.⁴⁷ But, unlike Poe, he avoids ranking the poets;⁴⁸ his criticism seldom is adverse. His literary standards are mixed,⁴⁹ but his real interests are non-literary: "morality" and nationality. Bryant is proof "that we can have a distinctive national literature", Hosmer's works are "of the small number that could not have been produced in any other country", Whittier is the kind "we most need" to build up "a literature that shall elevate with itself the national feeling and character."⁵⁰ Barlow deserved better treatment than he got, because he did not lose his religion in France, and his life was blameless.⁵¹ The classic expression of Griswold's critical point of view is the final paragraph on Pinckney:

Pinckney's is the first instance in this country in which we have to lament the prostitution of true poetical genius to unworthy purposes. Pervading much that he wrote there is a melancholy and sullen pride; dissatisfaction with the present, and doubt in regard to the future life.

⁴⁶ From the motto on p. xxix, quoted from T.B. Read.

⁴⁷ George W. Cutter's "Song of Steam" is "one of the best lyrics of the century." (p. 415) Sprague's "Shakespeare Ode" "one of the most vigorous and beautiful lyrics in the English language," (p. 125). A few of C.H. Hoffman's lyrics "are equal to the richest melodies of the time of Herrick and Waller." (p. 286)

⁴⁸ His space apportionment, he says in the Preface, was subject to considerations of accessibility rather than of genius. In 1843 it is as follows--in the number of double-column pages: Sprague 17, C.F. Hoffman, Sands, 14, Bryant 13, Mariah Brooks, Percival 12, Dana, Hillhouse 11, Pike, Willis 10, Timothy Dwight, Whittier 9, etc. The frontispiece shows Dana, Bryant, Halleck, Sprague and Longfellow--probably the ranking intended; Dana is boosted in the text. In the revised "Preface to the First Edition" in 1851, Bryant, Dana, Halleck, Longfellow and Whittier are named among those "who have written for the coming ages."

⁴⁹ Usually he speaks of purity and elegance of diction, correctness, etc.; occasionally of the "tone" of a poem; perhaps it depends on whom he is copying.

⁵⁰ Pp. 158, 401, 337.

⁵¹ P. 54 n.

The great distinguishing characteristic of American poetry is its pure and high morality. May it ever be so!⁵²

The criticism Griswold's book evoked was considerable and some of it valuable. Apart from the puffing and the sectional opposition already mentioned, there were various reflections upon the history and problems of American poetry from different points of view. The position of W.E. Channing is restated and applied to poetry by J.S. Dwight who is disposed by Griswold's book to ask some questions.⁵³ "But was it worth while and have we here a book of poetry?"⁵⁴ "Why is it, though, that almost every piece is by a young person?"⁵⁵ Finally, can there be an American poetry? Dwight believes not--in proportion as poetry breathed the spirit of American institutions it "should be purely human, wide, universal, and not patriotic and national."⁵⁶ Quite unlike Dwight and Channing's view is that of E.P. Whipple, the "American Macaulay."⁵⁷ This in its main lines--with its notions of Anglo-

⁵² P. 254. "May it ever be so!" was the final prayer of the original "Preface to the First Edition".--In this connection it is worth noting that while Griswold borrowed his definition of poetry from Poe ("the creation of beauty, the manifestation of the real by the ideal 'in words that move in metrical array'"; Cp. Robertson, *op. cit.* 256), still his conception of the function of poetry is moral ("The sense of beauty, next to the miraculous divine suasion is the means through which the human character is purified and elevated.")--"To the Reader".

⁵³ Christian Examiner 33 (Sept. 1842) Griswold to J.T. Field, Sept. 7, 1842: "...The review in the Examiner, I infer from what Ticknor says, and from your own brief notice is a scorcher..." Correspondence, p. 120.

⁵⁴ P. 27. He finds some true poetry (by Allston, Bryant, Pinckney, Jones Very) and much imitation, in all the styles from Pope through Dryden, Butler, Byron, Wordsworth, and even Keats and Mrs. Hemans; and lately of Shelley, Goethe, Schiller and the modern Germans.

⁵⁵ P. 30. He finds the explanation in American life which discourages all poetry is that it makes the poet self-conscious. America can't stop half way. It has lost its faith in an old order, it must posit faith in the new; the skepticism in between is deadly.

⁵⁶ P. 32.

⁵⁷ NAR 58 (Jan. 1844), 1-39. For a good study of Whipple as critic, see Harold Eby, American Romantic Criticism 1815-1860 [Univ. of Washington diss. in ms., n.d.] ch. XI.

American rivalry,⁵⁸ its insistence on the moral superiority of American poetry to British,⁵⁹ its defense of minor poets as necessary to a national literature,⁶⁰ its emphasis on the availability of American themes for poetry,⁶¹ and its sense of the need of an idealizing national literature "in order that America may take its due rank in the commonwealth of nations"⁶² is but a better statement of Griswold's position and its implications. As critic, too, Whipple is superior to Griswold.⁶³

By far the most interesting reaction to Griswold's Poets is that of Poe. It is still clouded by controversy, and perhaps always will be, but the main lines are clear.⁶⁴ It seems that after the first flush of Poe's enthusiasm over Griswold's book was gone and Poe was disillusioned about Griswold,⁶⁵ he sided

⁵⁸ P. 5. English anthologies, he says, with the crop of four centuries to choose from include many pieces that would confer no additional reputation upon Bryant, Longfellow, Willis, Dana, Halleck, Sprague, Percival or Drake. Pinckney has written as well, to say the least, as many of the Cavalier poets, as well as Lovelace and Carew and better than Waller, Sedley, Etherege and Dorset.

⁵⁹ P. 5: "...it appears to us quite absurd that in a country whose literature is stained with so many metrical productions offensive to good taste and good morals,--a country which has had its Tom D'Urfeys, Aphra Behns, Shadwells, Settles and Wolcotts, as well as its Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton and Wordsworth,--a country whose miscellaneous and magazine verse is at the present time inferior to our own,--there should be so much willingness to express pity or contempt for the poetry of the United States."

⁶⁰ P. 6: "All countries peopled by civilized men must have many minor poets....We might select from Mr. Griswold's selection many pieces which are better than some few poems included in the editions of Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge and Scott."

⁶¹ Pp. 36 f. America abounds in the materials of poetry. Its history, its scenery, the structure of its social life, the thought which pervades its political forms, the meaning which underlies its hot contests, are all capable of being exhibited in a poetical aspect.

⁶² P. 38.

⁶³ His superiority is best seen in criticism of Longfellow. (pp. 22-7).

⁶⁴ See supra, p. 73, and notes 1-3 for different attitudes towards Poe and Griswold, and infra, p. 83 note 72.

⁶⁵ See the excellent discussion of the Poe-Griswold controversy by Killis Campbell, loc. cit. (I shall first summarize the entire relationship, then in subsequent notes add details).

(except at times when he needed him) with the wits who made a sport of attacking the new American Parnassiad.⁶⁶ Poe wrote no

- 65 [cont.] Poe and Griswold met in March 1841, Griswold working on Poets. Poe in "Autography" (Graham's Dec., 1841) said Griswold knew more about American literature than any other man a-going. In the Poets (Mar., 1842) Griswold gave Poe small space, but favorable notice. Then Poe puffed the book in Graham's (See supra, p. 76) and gave Griswold another review which Griswold had published in Boston Miscellany in Nov., 1842 (in this Poe said he disagreed with Griswold in a thousand instances, mentioned an unconscious New England bias, but called it "the most important addition which our literature has for many years received." [*Italics are Poe's*]. If this is the review which Poe referred to when he told F.N. Thomas and T. Dunn-English he had played a joke on Griswold, he must have had a poor recollection of its contents; unless Griswold had doctored it, but this would hardly have escaped Poe or been left unpublished by him. See Correspondence, 121 f. Poe assured Griswold in a letter that the Poets, not without faults, was "a better book than any other man in the United States could have made of the materials". [This letter was published by Griswold in his edition of Poe's Works (1856) I, xxi. According to Dr. Robertson, Griswold's purpose in becoming Poets editor was to "revise" Poe's views of Griswold.] After all this enthusiasm, which I take to be sincere [though the puff of the Female Poets sounds as if Poe had written it from notes by Griswold], Poe discovered that Griswold had replaced him at Graham's. Then he wrote (July 6th) to a Southern friend of his intention to "make war to the knife against such New Englandism as Griswold's" in a projected magazine, told the story of his having fooled Griswold when he tried to bribe him for a puff, attacked Griswold's editorial ability in the New World of March 11, and his Poets in the Philadelphia Saturday Museum and in his lectures on the "Poetry of America" at Philadelphia in November 1843 and at Baltimore in March 1844. Poe and Lowell in their letters agreed that Griswold was a joke. Poe was engaged for half a dozen years before his death on a project similar to Griswold's, which he seems to have conceived of variously, from an anthology to a history of American literature. In 1845, when Griswold was working on the Prose Writers and in the National Intelligencer, August 30, 1845, praised Poe very highly (Campbell) Poe was friendly again and borrowed money from Griswold as well as from Horace Greeley in a vain effort to keep his Broadway Journal going. Another rupture in 1846. In June 1847, after the appearance of Prose Writers, Poe was extremely civil (Correspondence, p. 230) and in his review of the Female Poets (Works (Stedman & Woodberry) VIII, 158-61) in 1849 fairly puffs both the Female Poets and the Prose Writers. Griswold increased Poe's allowance in a new edition of the Poets, from three to fourteen pieces, and according to his own account, in June was called in by Poe for aid in disposing of some writings and was chosen, shortly before Poe's death on October 7, as Poe's literary executor. (Robertson questions the truth of Griswold's assertion of Poe's choice; op. cit. 164-9.)
- 66 Literary World, June 5, 1847 - then edited by C.F. Hoffman - in review of the eighth edition of the Poets: "...each one [edition] in turn has been so desperately attacked by the wits that the book seemed annihilated at least once a year."

satire like the Fable for Critics.⁶⁷ Apart from a review in the Philadelphia Saturday Museum⁶⁸ and stinging references in his lecture on American Poets,⁶⁹ (which he later omitted) Poe's reply to Griswold apparently was to have been a rival critical anthology, his own Parnassus, or a history of American literature.⁷⁰

Poe's about face on the Poets was complete, and is one of the most curious instances in the history of American literary criticism; but it is not inherently impossible. Here are, by the same unmistakeable hand, two views of the same book as different from each other as Jekyll and Hyde.⁷¹ Which, then, is Poe's view? The simple answer seems to be, both.⁷² Both views are Poe's and they reflect a dualism that appears in his thought as well as in

67 Poe to Lowell, March 6, 1844. G.E. Woodberry, Life of Edgar Allan Poe (1909), II, 61-3. Lowell to Poe, June 27, 1844, in Griswold Correspondence, p. 151. For Fable for Critics, see infra, pp. 106-9.

68 The authorship of this review, accepted by Gill, Woodberry, Harrison, Robertson, Hervey Allen, etc., is scouted by Killis Campbell, loc. cit., and challenged by J.L. Neu, op. cit., 122, n. 62: "....The writer of it may have been a friend of Poe's. It would seem almost unbelievable that the man who penned the two reviews summarized above, who criticized Griswold publicly (as he did in his Philadelphia lecture, November 3, 1842) would hide himself under the cloak of anonymity, unless indeed he were in his cups or were unsettled mentally." The friend of Poe's, however, is quite incredible.

69 See Modern Language Notes 28 (March 1913), 68.

70 See Killis Campbell, loc. cit. 462 f. The project, in Poe's references and advance notices in the press, was called variously The American Parnassus, Living Writers of America, The Authors of America in Prose and Verse, Literary America, A Critical History of American Literature. It was to include not only the writers of New York City (as had the Literati papers in Godey's and the Democratic Review) but the "whole Union". Cp. Woodberry, Life of Poe, II, 92. In November 1845, Poe had taken \$50 from the publisher as an advance on Parnassus, see supra, p. 76, n. 33.

71 "...the most important addition which our literature has for many years received"--"...a muttonish performance".

72 The alternatives are (1) to suppose that Poe was never really congenial with Griswold, never really taken with his book; the emphasis then falls on Griswold's interest in editing Poe; (2) to suppose that Poe never was as hard on Griswold as the Philadelphia Saturday Museum review indicates. The emphasis then falls on Poe's favorable comment.

his personality. Poe was capable of literary log-rolling as well as of the severest indictment of it; Poe was susceptible to the literary nationalism that lifted Griswold's book and kept it up⁷³ as well as capable of hatred of the New England bias, the shoddy criticism, the cheap and dubious practices he found parading under the banner of literary patriotism. Poe's temporary infatuation is no less truly Poe than his speedy revulsion. Poe shared the spirit of his age as well as fought it.

But to proceed with Griswold's anthologies. His Curiosities of American Literature⁷⁴ and his Female Poets of America⁷⁵ add nothing essential to his picture of American literature. The former, besides borrowing extensively from Knapp and copying earlier borrowings from Kettell,⁷⁶ contains a sketch of early American ballads⁷⁷ and an expression of Griswold's anti-Jeffersonian attitude.⁷⁸ The latter volume grew out of one of the many gift books Griswold was constantly compiling,⁷⁹ which had been

⁷³ For expression of Poe's radical nationalism see *infra*, p. 98.

⁷⁴ Published with Disraeli's Curiosities in an American edition, 1847. This was a piece of hackwork that Greeley had thrown Griswold's way in 1843. (Correspondence, p. 134, at the time Griswold had to leave Graham's.)

⁷⁵ Published by Carey and Hart, Philadelphia, 1848.

⁷⁶ He copies from Knapp, with only the slightest acknowledgment, the entire account of See-quah-yah, down to the last flourish, and comment on the older writers. From his own "Historical Introduction" to the Poets he borrows heavily, e.g., Bay Psalm Book, Mrs. Bradstreet, The Poetry of Governor Wolcott, Mather Byles and Joseph Green, Peter Folger, Michael Wigglesworth, The First American Dramatic Writers, Robert Treat Paine, Sands, Barlow.

⁷⁷ "The Minstrelsy of the Indian Wars and the Revolution" is slightly enlarged from his "The Minstrelsy of the Revolution" in Graham's, Oct. 1842; "Epitaphs, Anagrams etc. of the Puritans" and the article on A.H. Bogart appear in both. Cp. Graham's 21 (Sept. 1842) 167-8. See J.L. Neu, *op. cit.* 128, n. 78.

⁷⁸ Discusses Jefferson's authorship of the Declaration of Independence; comes to negative conclusion. Cp. Prose Writers, pp. 72 f.

⁷⁹ Cp. Gems from American Female Poets, with Brief Biographical Notices, Philadelphia, 1842, 1844 [This was the start of the Female Poets]; Readings in American Poetry, New York, 1843; the same "for the use in schools", New York, 1843; The

copiously copied from by T.B. Read and Caroline May⁸⁰ in more pretentious anthologies; apparently to save the market Griswold padded out a companion volume to his Poets with pieces selected entirely from The Female Poets of America.⁸¹ This was of course illustrated. In a clever disclaimer in the Preface, Griswold hinted that at bottom he did not believe in all this female poetry but at the same time he praised this by-product of American civilization and professed being "struck with the number of youthful female voices that soften and enrich the tumult of enterprise and action," particularly "in the West, too, where we look for what is more thoroughly native and essential in American character."

This flattering allusion in 1848 to the West may have been prompted by a consciousness of having slighted it in the Prose Writers of America in 1847.⁸² The Prose Writers, in more than one respect is more important than the Poets. It is, for one thing, more characteristic of Griswold. He "kicks" more in it, as he says,⁸³ is more assertive, more extreme, more spiteful,

⁷⁹ [Cont.] Illustrated Book of Christian Ballads and Other Poems, Philadelphia, 1844; The Poetry of Love, Boston, 1844, 1846, New York, 1848; Gift Leaves of American Poetry, New York, 1849; Gift of Affection, A Souvenir, New York, Leavitt, (n.d.); The Sacred Poets of England and America, New York, 1857; The Poetry of Sentiments, ed. New York, 1887 [based on a volume with the same title published in England in 1841, revised, see Preface].

⁸⁰ Thomas Buchanan Read, The Female Poets of America; Caroline May, The American Female Poets. See Griswold's Female Poets, Preface, for evidence of their unacknowledged indebtedness to him.

⁸¹ Five female poets had appeared with biographical and critical introduction in the Poets. In the Female Poets there are 93 from Anne Bradstreet to Anna H. Philips; some of them have 10 double-column pages or more (Maria Brooks 21, Frances Osgood 16, Elizabeth Oakes-Smith 15, Alice and Phoebe Carey and Lydia Sigourney 14), fourteen more between five and ten. The volume is illustrated; the frontispiece shows the author. Of "Zophiel" by Mariah Brooks (whom Southey in The Doctor had called "the most impassioned and most imaginative of all poetesses") there are fifteen columns of analysis interspersed with quotations.

⁸² The slight was resented by Coggeshall.

⁸³ Correspondence, p. 225.

too, more dogmatic, more himself. For another, Griswold was more at home with prose than with poetry.⁸⁴ Moreover, the prose writing of the United States was more important than its poetry. Finally, this book rounds out Griswold's survey of American literature; an introductory essay of thirty five pages expresses Griswold's view of the "intellectual history, conditions and prospects" of the country. What with expert advice and considerable aid again⁸⁵ and the benefit of his experience with the Poets and the criticism it had provoked, Griswold should have made the Prose Writers a superior book. He did not, for two reasons. The first was that there was not the tradition for a collection

⁸⁴ Cp. Poe, Works (Stedman and Woodberry), VIII, 158.

⁸⁵ See Correspondence, 161-3, 166-72, 186 f., 189, 203-12, 223-9, for letters (1844 to 1847) from C.H. Hoffman, Andrews Norton (this an elaborate one, to W.H. Furness, pp. 162 f.), Horace Greeley, John Neal (who had had "a similar thought in his head years ago", p. 167), E.P. Whipple. Hoffman's coaching reveals Griswold's tendencies. Whipple's letter of advice about the English edition (April 26, 1847, pp. 227-9--the American edition had come out March 3, see p. 223) throws a good deal of light on both Griswold and his book. It explains much of the stir the book caused. Whipple criticizes Griswold's tone, "a clerical way of saying, 'I don't give a damn for anybody'", advises him to "soften a little here and there", above all to omit the comparison of Webster to Burke; but--better have a literary friend who knows London go over the book. Whipple himself feels too exposed at the very end of the book, and certainly wants Griswold to cut "the tremendous puff about my style being Milton and Addison fused together" (He had instructed Griswold not to call him Macaulay because he really aimed at writing prose like Milton's, p. 206); wants Griswold, too, to put in N.H. Hudson (the Shakespeare commentator), tells him exactly what to say and what not to say ("Don't put anything in about 'cribbing'..."). Then he takes up the Duyckinck review in the Literary World. He had, in March, expressed his admiration for the new journal (p. 225). Now he is sorry about the review, finds it "very one sided and harsh," nevertheless provoked by Griswold's "shabby-genteel damnation of Mathews." In this, he hints, Griswold is running with the pack. About Cornelius Mathews, finally, he has this to say: "Mathews has not had justice done him and therefore to be tenderly touched. You may depend upon it that his influence across the water will be against you if you do not modify your criticism upon him. I wish you would take out some of the eulogy on me and put it on to Cornelius. You would not in that case increase the aggregate of your praise." Ibid.

of prose that there was for one of verse;⁸⁶ the other was Griswold himself.

Three aspects of the Prose Writers are of special interest here--Griswold's historical sketch, his attitude towards nationalism, and his criticism. His introductory essay under sixteen captions⁸⁷ is neither history nor sociological analysis, but merely a tremendous puff.⁸⁸ Writers are puffed in the Survey, who are handled more severely later by themselves.⁸⁹ Wherever Griswold turns he finds Americans have done well (too well, in fact, in mechanical and natural science).⁹⁰ True they have produced but little drama, because of the "weak and wicked" copy-right law, yet they have at least preferred plays on American themes.⁹¹ In theology, from the first, they have shown an American

⁸⁶ Cp. Cheever's Commonplace Book of American Prose (1828) and Cleveland's Compendium of American Literature (1858) for what seems to have been the tendency, growing out of the commonplace book tradition. Griswold still is looking for purple passages (See Correspondence, p. 161) and his selections are justly criticised by Duyckinck for their choppiness. Neal's idea had been more daring: "My plan was to take up one writer of the country, worth meeting, and give a just notice of what he was good for, with samples. Yours, I take it for granted, is a better and safer plan. You will make no enemies and no friends." (p. 167). He was wrong about the enemies.

⁸⁷ Theology, history, public speaking, political writing, jurisprudence, archaeology, mechanical and natural science, romantic fiction, the tale; humorous, satirical and comic writing; essays, voyages and travels; female sex; poetry, drama, plastic arts. A number of distinguished writers are given a paragraph each. Melville is mentioned last on a list of travelers but Headley had his place in the text.

⁸⁸ The idea seems to be to answer the Foreign Quarterly (Jan. 1844) review (by Forster) of the Poets, which had provoked a counter-attack by F. Bowen and C.C. Felton, NAR 59 (July 1844), 1-44, and prompted G.P. Putnam's American Facts (1845).

⁸⁹ E.g. C.B. Brown's style is described in the survey (p. 29): "...his style was clear and nervous, with little ornament, free of affectation, and indicated a singular sincerity and depth of feeling." In the sketch of Brown (p. 111): "His style is not good; in a majority of his works at least it lacks simplicity, directness and has numerous verbal faults." Cp. comments on Robert Walsh, W.E. Channing, Orestes Brownson.

⁹⁰ P. 26.

⁹¹ As the success of plays by Bird and Conrad, the failure of plays by Longfellow and Willis show. P. 46.

spirit.⁹² They have written more than four hundred large historical works, most of which relate to the United States.⁹³ "I have in my own library more than 700 volumes of novels, tales, and romances by American writers...few so poor as not to deserve place in a general collection of our literature,...not below the average of English novels of the nineteenth century."⁹⁴ Women have done wonders too.⁹⁵ The South and the West, to be sure are somewhat backward, though promising.⁹⁶ But "considering the facts of our political and social history we have already advanced far beyond the boundaries of reasonable expectation."⁹⁷ Griswold is not complacent. His "history" is a rally call. The American intellectual empire Bishop Berkeley prophesied is still far from achieved.⁹⁸

⁹² Griswold edited an anti-Catholic paper at a time when feeling ran high and at one time at least was in danger of mob violence, (See Correspondence, p. 153). To him, Americanism is Protestantism: "In theology, from the first, our writers were unshackled by foreign models or authorities. They acknowledged no infallible head but God Almighty, and no patriotic guides to faith and practice but the holy company of the prophets and apostles." Prose Writers, p. 17.

⁹³ P. 20 n.

⁹⁴ P. 28.

⁹⁵ "...in fifty years woman has done more in the domain of intellect than before in five centuries," p. 44. That is not much, though, in Griswold's private opinion. "...the literature of women, everywhere, is for the most part sauzle..." There are four women represented in the Prose Writers: Catharine Sedgwick, Lydia M. Child, Caroline Kirkland, Margaret Fuller.

⁹⁶ The South gets it on the first page: the Southern states, though they have a large wealthy class enjoying leisure and quiet "have done comparatively nothing in the fields of intellectual exertion, except when startled into spasmodic activity by conflicts of interest with the North". (In fairness to Griswold it should be noted that he believes in conflict rather than quiet as conducive to intellectual exertion). Cp. p. 37: "Comic literature [distinct from humor and satire] must be looked for chiefly in those parts of the country which have yet furnished little or nothing of a different sort," viz. the South and the West. See also his survey of American periodicals in a long footnote, p. 38, for his bias. His list includes 11 New England periodicals, 11 New York, 8 Philadelphia, 2 Southern and no Western journals.

⁹⁷ P. 47.

The nationalism underlying Griswold's Survey at first seems a little shifty. Griswold is not a clear or careful thinker, and he loves impressive phrases. He is apt to talk like Lowell while he still thinks like Griswold. An analysis of his most important expressions on Americanism in literature reveals the following position:⁹⁹ (1) American literature must be national in spirit, not necessarily in subject. "It is absurd to suppose"--in 1847, though Griswold had supposed so in 1842--that American themes are essential. Still Griswold tried to talk Bayard Taylor into choosing American subjects.¹⁰⁰ (2) There should be no strain-

⁹⁸ The "Survey" ends in a recital of "the prophecy which nearly a century ago [sic!] was made of our destiny by one of the wisest of the sons of Europe."

⁹⁹ The chief loci are: (1) Poets (1842) "To the Reader" and (2) the later revision of the "Preface to the First Edition" as in the eleventh edition (1851), and then (3) the sketch of Bayard Taylor (pp. 511 f.), (4) Prose Writers (1847), the "Survey", and (5) among the sketches, particularly those of Verplanck, Cooper and Cornelius Mathews. The references to nationality are frequent throughout the Prose Writers. One aspect of Griswold's nationalism may be worth noting here: his attitude towards England. In a recent study of the appraisal of England in American literature before the Civil War by a German student (K.H. Pfeffer, England in literarischen Urteil der Vereinigten Staaten bis zum Bürgerkrieg...1928) I was struck by the frequent quotations from Griswold's Prose Writers and by the fact that all of these express one attitude towards England, most strikingly perhaps in the "Salve, magna parens," of Robert Walsh, an Irish Catholic. I found the same Anglo-Saxonism in the Poets. (See A.C. Coxe and J.T. Fields in the eleventh edition, 1851). Griswold himself speaks of "that nation whose language we speak, whose manners we adopt, and which was the home of our ancestors, and is the holy land to which our spirits turn", but also of the danger of having American tastes and feelings "fashioned by the subjects of kings." (Poets, 1843, "To the Reader")

¹⁰⁰ In Poets, 1842, "To the Reader": "There are, connected with this country, no lack of subjects for poetry and romance;"--he gives a long list. In 1851 the same sentence: "A national Literature is not necessarily confined to local subjects, but if it were we have no lack of themes for romance, poetry or any other sort of writing..." In Prose Writers, 1847: "It is absurd to suppose that Indian chiefs or republican soldiers must be the characters of our works of imagination, or that the gloomy forests, or sea-like prairies, or political committee rooms must be their scenes...a 'national work' may as well be written about the builders of the Pyramids as about the mound builders". (The allusions to Cornelius Mathews are obvious. In 1851 he records his debates with Bayard Taylor

ing after nationalism--no "Young America" movement copied from Europe, no innovations in style and treatment, no realism (as in Simms and Cornelius Mathews)¹⁰¹--"no forcing nationalism by a hot-bed process." (3) There should, however, be a stop to the "weak and wicked policy of the government" permitting literary piracy (of which Griswold himself had taken full advantage),¹⁰² because

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- ¹⁰⁰ [Cont.] (Poets, p. 511 f.): "It is undoubtedly true that to be American, it is not needful in all cases to select subjects which are so geographically; but--" "...for an American author whose heart keeps time with his country's" to select materials from Russia or Spain, while America is unused, is incomprehensible. Cromwell's England, however, "offers almost as appropriate field for illustration by the American as Massachusetts under Hutchinson, except in the accessories of nature."
- ¹⁰¹ "Our 'Young America' had not wit enough to coin for itself a name, but must parody one used in England....In all its reviews of literature and art, the standards are English," copying fifth rate men in England. (Prose Writers, p. 544.) "The absurdest of all schemes is that of creating a national literature by inventing tricks of speech or by any sort of forced originality. Of which proof enough may be found in the writings of Mr. Mathews..." His basic objection is clear from his comment on Simms, whom he did not dislike personally as he did Mathews: "He gives us too much of ruffianism. The coarseness and villainy of many of his characters have no attraction in works of imagination. If true to nature, which may be doubted, it is not true to nature as we love to contemplate it, and it serves no good purpose in literature." (p. 504.) Similarly: "The style of Mr. Mathews is unnatural, and in many cases indicates a mind accustomed to the contemplation of vulgar depravity. Who would think of finding such names as 'Hobble-shank', 'Greasy Peterson', 'Fishblatt' or 'Flab' in Washington Irving or Nathaniel Hawthorne?"--For "Young America" in politics, see Merle Curti, American Historical Review 32 (Oct. 1926), 34-55.
- ¹⁰² For a good account of the Mammoth press, and Greeley and Griswold's parts in it, see Mott, op. cit., 358-63: Park Benjamin and Griswold, both trained on Greeley's New Yorker, started the Brother Jonathan; six months later, with Jonas Winchester, started another fiction weekly, the New World, published sometimes in what Griswold called "Leviathan sheets" (pages more than four feet long and eleven columns wide). Extras were gotten out to beat the Harper brothers to the publication of new novels by Dickens, G.P.R. James, or other popular foreign novelists. Griswold in 1841 edited the "mammoth" Boston Notion--"104 square feet of reading matter". In the wake of the Mammoth press came the "Satanic press" publishing spicy weekly newspapers at two cents a copy. The New World, however, boasted that it was not "Satanic": "its ample pages are unsoiled by profane or improper jests, vulgar allusions, or irreligious sentiments" (Jan. 1, 1842, Advertisement). E.A. Duyckinck was among the strongest objectors to

this system puts the "real education of the American heart" into the hands of foreigners and the tremendous competition discourages American authors.¹⁰³ (4) Nationalism should include humanity. "It must teach that the interests of man are the highest concern of men."¹⁰⁴ This internationalism is unexpected. (5) In short, Americanism in literature--a term Griswold abhors, an attitude he advocates--involves a threefold belief: belief in progress, belief in democracy, and belief in the destiny of America to lead the world in literature as in democracy and progress.¹⁰⁵ The internationalism is but nationalism writ large.

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- ¹⁰² [Cont.] the whole business, which crowded out American authors, endangered morality, though it might spread a taste for reading. This gave extra point to the copyright agitation, in which Duyckinck and Mathews played a part. Griswold joined this in 1842, became vehement in 1847, notwithstanding his Correspondence shows as late as 1845 that Greeley supposed him to be interested in pirating an edition of Shelley's poems (pp. 184 f.). Cp. Headley's charge in his review of Prose Writers, in Headley's Miscellanies, New York, 1850, pp. 284-98.
- ¹⁰³ Griswold's guess (p. 434 n.) that Bird, like many others, quit writing because of the copyright act of 1839, was wrong. Bird quit because of ill health. See C.E. Foust, The Life and Dramatic Works of Robert Montgomery Bird, New York, 1919, pp. 114 f.
- ¹⁰⁴ This sounds like Channing and J.D.S. Dwight. The turn Griswold gives it, however, is that of A.B. Meek's Americanism in Literature.
- ¹⁰⁵ This statement of Griswold's creed is taken from his remarks on Bancroft and the conclusion of his survey. Of Bancroft he says: "He is emphatically an American....He surveys the train of ages, and perceives that humanity is progressive. In our own polity, our institutions, our universal and safe liberty, he sees the farthest point to which the race has yet attained. He looks hopefully into the future, far as the human eye can see, and his powerful mind kindles with enthusiasm, as he finds our country fulfilling her mission, in the subversion of false opinions, the overthrow of tyrannous dynasties, the liberation of mankind." Cp. his response to Goethe's suggestion (in Eckermann's Conversations) that under the influence of improved communication and the press, national characteristics would disappear and world literature would replace national literature. Griswold turns this to good advantage: World literature under the lead of America, (p. 47). "The genius of America was born in England, and his strength was put forth in those conflicts of the commonwealth which ended in the exile of young Hercules." Poets (1851), 511. Cp. A.B. Meek, op. cit.

Nationality is the chief of Griswold's criteria in the Prose Writers; in fact, it seems to cover the other more important ones: orthodoxy, "morality", ideality. "The first man of the world", he opened the body of his book, "during the second quarter of the 18th century was Jonathan Edwards of Connecticut."¹⁰⁶ Channing by comparison looks pretty pale. "He had neither the learning nor the metaphysical power to be a great theologian."¹⁰⁷ Second to Edwards is Cooper.¹⁰⁸ Franklin is accepted as "among the most national of our writers,"¹⁰⁹ Jefferson is rejected as "among the most dangerous of deistical writers."¹¹⁰ Webster, though, "is in every sense American".¹¹¹ He is, in fact, an impersonation of the national character, and very, very great. "If I were to compare him to any foreigner it would be to Burke. But he is greater than the Irish Colossus. His genius is more various...."¹¹² Poe's varied genius is not sensed. Poe's prose is well described, but as a critic--"His chief skill lies in the dissection of sentences."¹¹³ Margaret Fuller is treated spitefully,¹¹⁴ Cornelius Mathews is simply abused.¹¹⁵ Seventy prose

¹⁰⁶ Walsh's Defense "perhaps less from ignorance than from prejudice" omitted Edwards "whose simple name was worth 500 pages". Prose Writers, p. 41 n. Cp. p. 198: "One might as well not mention Homer in a history of Greek poetry."

¹⁰⁷ P. 161. Cp. Poets (1851), 511: "Of all writers who have yet written, MILTON was the most American (Griswold in 1845 had brought out the first American edition of Milton's Prose Works, and found then that "he is, in fact, the greatest human being that ever lived"--Preface, p. xi.) All the works of CHANNING embrace less that is national to us than a page of the "Defense of the People of England".

¹⁰⁸ P. 265. "Of all Americans who visited Europe, Mr. Cooper contributed most to our country's good reputation...He had the somewhat singular merit of never forgetting that he was an American." [Cp. Milton in Italy.]

¹⁰⁹ P. 40.

¹¹⁰ P. 73.

¹¹¹ P. 177.

¹¹² P. 21.

¹¹³ P. 524.

¹¹⁴ Calls her fond of epigram, facile, and brilliant but prejudiced.

¹¹⁵ P. 544: "Some writers are said to advance on stilts; our author may be said to proceed difficultly, strainingly, jerkingly through the mire."

writers¹¹⁶ are presented in chronological order; the Index to Authors names 190 referred to in the introductory essay or in the text. There are some bibliographical notes.¹¹⁷ The sketches of the authors run as high as six or seven double column pages.¹¹⁸

Four days after Griswold had noted the appearance of the Prose Writers in his diary, he gave J.T. Fields a graphic account of its reception. It was even worse than he had expected.¹¹⁹ "It deserves indeed no great success, but it is condemned for the very reasons of the little excellence it has."¹²⁰ It was condemned for better reasons presently. The most important of the magazine reviews, because of both its contents and its consequences was E.A. Duyckinck's in the Literary World, March 20, 1847.¹²¹ This review was completely negative.¹²² Duyckinck took

¹¹⁶ 13 divines, 12 political writers, 3 historical writers, 26 novelists and tale-writers, 14 essayists, a traveller, a naturalist, and an ethnographer.--E.A. Duyckinck's count in Literary World, March 20, 1847.

¹¹⁷ E.g. A.H. Everett--his contributions to NAR (p. 285 n.) Authorship of Shepard Lee is attributed to Bird, whose publisher was the same as Griswold's.

¹¹⁸ Franklin 6, Cooper 7.

¹¹⁹ On December 29, 1846, Griswold had written to Fields: "I dread its appearance. "Young America" will be rabid; and what is worse, you and my kind friends will be disappointed." (Correspondence, p. 221) Diary: Mar. 3...The Prose Writers of America published today. March 7, to Fields: "The book is not received with kindness...One of our editors here says it is a bundle of puffs of my friends...Mr. Chandler here--and Mr. John Frost, Mr. "Table Beer" Morris and Messrs. the 70... are astonished, and more indignant even than surprised. Greeley is angry at what I offer under the name of Margaret [Fuller]...Inman, Parke Godwin, W.A. Jones (how could Whipple puff that miserable diluter of old New Monthly articles?)--E.A. Duyckinck, J.B. Auld, and the whole mob of 'Young America', 'swears terribly' that they're omitted and the amiable Cornelius, centurion of the sect, is so 'abused'. Then there is Mrs. Embury, Mrs. Hale, Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, Mrs. Sigourney, Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Ellet...I call these names to your memory that you may know why my book is damned by all the newspapers so. Op. cit., p. 223 f.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ The Democratic Review was running a series of "Young America" articles on "Nationality in Literature" in March, April and May, written by one of the Duyckinck-Mathews group, according to W.M. Griswold by W.A. Jones, (see Correspondence, p. 182). In April Griswold comes in for very hard, though casual

121 [Cont.] criticism ("The work not only lacks general power but tone. Its web and woof are wrought out of other men's ideas... Neither the writers selected, nor the writings quoted appear to have been taken upon any principle...Chaos umpire sat!") while Mathews receives oil and wine, pp. 318-20. The editor apologizes for the Mathews puff in the next issue, (p. 388) which has a sane, unfavorable review of Griswold. In May the Knickerbocker agrees with the daily Courier and Enquirer that the reviews in the Democratic Review and Literary World are "very shabby, very weak, and show only uneasy malice", and speaks of a literary "dicker" by which the Southern Literary Messenger has been hired to republish one or both of these notices. This exposure may account for the strange fact that in Southern Literary Messenger 13 (April 1847) 209-14 Duyckinck's review is reprinted, but in June (pp. 381-3) after an editorial apology (which mentions that Duyckinck's review had been pronounced unjust, by some denounced as malicious, and that Duyckinck was no longer editor of the Literary World but had been succeeded by C.F. Hoffman..."thus fortunate in being something of a pet of Mr. Griswold both in Prose and Poetry"), an independent review of the book charges it with sectional prejudice and ignorance. (The Southern Literary Messenger reviewed the book a third time,--the third edition in March, 1850--as an excuse to boost Webster.) The Knickerbocker (which in May had mentioned also a favorable review in the Boston Courier) ran a series of five articles on the Prose Writers between October 1847 and March 1848, and in addition a notice in January 1848 of a highly commendatory notice in the London Morning Chronicle. (In August 1848 the Eclectic reprinted an article from the Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review). H.W. Binney reviewed the book favorably, of course (the book was dedicated to him); see his Literary Criticisms. A personal attack was made by J.T. Headley, who was involved in controversy with Griswold on another score in 1847. (See Griswold, Correspondence pp. 231 f.) See Headley's Miscellanies, 1850, pp. 284-98.

122 To clear up the background of the Griswold-Duyckinck controversy the Duyckinck papers need to be investigated. This I have been unable to do. Duyckinck had attacked various activities with which Griswold was identified; e.g. attack on system of piracy in American Whig Review 1 (Feb. 1845) 146-51, and on "milliner's literature" in American Whig Review 4 (Oct. 1846), 405-8. When Poe was put out with Duyckinck in 1845 for making a poor selection of his Tales for the Wiley and Putnam Library of American books, he wrote to Griswold about it; at the same time he was writing to Duyckinck about his Parnassus. Duyckinck and Griswold represented rival interests. They represented different social viewpoints and philosophies. Duyckinck was a college-bred, well-to-do New Yorker, Griswold a half-educated New Englander driven to his wits for bread. Duyckinck was an Episcopalian who believed in institutions. Griswold was a Baptist radical with a streak of Napoleonism. (Cf. his comments on Scott and Channing for their treatment of Napoleon). Without Griswold's attack on Mathews, the two might never have collided; as it was, Duyckinck's attack on Griswold cost him his editorship (the publisher of the Literary World was the husband of the poetess Frances Osgood, a friend of Griswold). What this and in the last analysis what Griswold's anthologies had to do with Duyckinck's decision to make the Cyclopaedia of American Literature, might be cleared up by a study of the Duyckinck letters.

exception to Griswold's method, to his point of view, to his criticisms, to his lack of ideas, and to his omissions. His book should have been either historical or critical, either a compendium or a selection; it was an unpleasant cross between the two, with a scrappiness worse even than in the Poets. Griswold's attitude towards the South was belied by his own evidence.¹²³ His criticism was sometimes puffing, sometimes a mere recital of negative qualities, sometimes a jumbled catalogue, sometimes personal.¹²⁴ The book made no pretensions to any general views except as it harped on nationality and copyright; snubbing and abusing other workers for the same cause. With all due allowance for omissions, Duyckinck insists that among others Melville, Paine, Gallatin, and Kent deserved a place. In short--(is Duyckinck thinking here of Poe's project or of one of his own?)--

A critical history of the literature of the country worthy to send forth to the world, is a work which still remains to be accomplished. Such a work will certainly exhibit the national intellect in a much more favorable light than Mr. Griswold, with all his opportunities has attained in this big and little book.¹²⁵

Griswold waited nine years for his revenge.¹²⁶

¹²³ Griswold's own list, which might be enlarged, showed Jefferson, Madison, Marshall, Calhoun, Audubon, Washington, Allston, Legaré, W.G. Simms, Wirt, R.H. Wilde, Kennedy, Bird, Poe--one fifth of the 70.

¹²⁴ He objected particularly to the "harsh" treatment of Margaret Fuller, and the "coarse and illiberal" treatment of Mathews.

¹²⁵ P. 151.

¹²⁶ Unless he had influenced Duyckinck's dismissal from the Literary World. This revenge came when he wrote his review of the Duyckinck Cyclopaedia.

GRISWOLD TO DUYCKINCK

Between Griswold's Poets in 1842 and the Duyckincks' Cyclopaedia in 1856 came a series of minor contributions, more or less influenced by Griswold's aggressive anthologies. First, there was Poe's project, which almost certainly would not have been a minor contribution, had it been completed. Though Poe was bound by nature to discuss American writers and had begun to do so before Griswold, yet the idea of a book on the subject seems to have been suggested by Griswold's work. Whether the abortion of that book is to be laid to Poe himself or to the age he lived in, may be idle to speculate upon. But a glance at Poe's views of American literature is quite to the purpose of piecing out as far as possible the picture forming in the American mind of its literature. Poe assumed two stages of literary civilization, the impulsive and the critical. Germany was still in the impulsive, England had advanced far, France much farther into the critical.¹ America was with France and England, more prosaic than poetical.² "We have less imagination and warmer sympathies than the age which

¹ In "Marginalia" on Fouqué, Works (Stedman and Woodberry), VII, 252-56--"Literary Germany thus presents the singular spectacle of the impulsive spirit surrounded by the critical, and, of course, in some measure influenced thereby...As the impulsive spirit subsides, and the critical uprises, there will appear the polished insipidity of the later England, or the ultimate throe of taste which has found its best exemplification in Sue. ...And this anomalous state [of German literature]...is the source of the grossly conflicting opinions about German letters [in the United States]." Ibid. 252 f.

² Fouqué's Thiodolf the Icelander and Aslanga's Knight is "too simple, too direct, too obvious, too bold, not sufficiently complex, to be relished by any people who have thoroughly passed the first (or impulsive) epoch of literary civilization...It is admirable of its kind, but its kind can never be appreciated by Americans...Even the exquisite "Undine" is too chilly for our people, and, generally, for our epoch." Ibid.

preceded us."³ Starting from this assumption of the limited possibilities of American literature, Poe's criticism is essentially creative; it tends to clear the ground and point the way to possible progress, even in the case of the drama, which to most observers seemed more hopeless than any other form of literature in his day. The drama, Poe finds, is not really declining, but stationary, except in its mechanics where it is progressing.⁴ As in the other imitative arts its standstill, however, is practically retrogression by comparison with the rapid progress of the utilitarian arts depending on reason. "Wherever reason predominates we advance; where mere feeling or taste is the guide, we remain as we are." The thing to do, then, is to engraft reason upon feeling and taste and--burning or burying the old models and re-considering the inherent possibilities--make the drama realistic.⁵ No less downright is Poe's analysis of literary conditions in America. American literature is dragging on a twofold heritage, an attitude of colonial dependence upon England and an opposite tendency to overpraise all American writing.⁶ Out of this lack of self-respect and intellectual integrity, which is in the last analysis a failure to respect the mind,⁷ there has developed a

³ Ibid. For this setting of imagination against feeling, cp. "The Philosophy of Composition" (Works, VI, 36): "Now the object, Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object, Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable to a certain extent in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a homeliness (the truly passionate will comprehend me), which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul."

⁴ "The American Drama", Works, VI, 199-204.

⁵ P. 201.

⁶ "Colonies have always naturally aped the mother land." Works, VI, 18. "Upon all who wrote, the applause was plastered with an impartiality really refreshing." Works, VIII, 265.

⁷ "When shall the artist assume his proper situation in society--in a society of thinking beings? How long shall mind succumb to the grossest materiality? How long shall the veriest vermin of the Earth, who crawl around the altar of Mammon, be more esteemed of men than they, the gifted ministers of those exalted emotions,

plague in the form of a commercialized literature. A flourishing publishers' "racket", with a perfect system of quackery and puffing controlling public criticism (often exactly opposite to the private opinions of the critics) as well as authorship has brought it about that "as a literary people we are one vast perambulating humbug."⁸ To build up a national literature the United States need (1) a declaration of intellectual war against England,⁹ (2) respect for foreign criticism,¹⁰ (3) honest, fearless, discriminating American criticism,¹¹ and, as a result, a complete revaluation of all the false evaluations of American writers settling in the American mind. "Among the pioneers of American literature there is not one whose productions have not been much overrated by his countrymen, because of their surprise at any authorship at

⁷ [Cont.] which link us with the mysteries of Heaven." Works, (Harrison) VIII, 230.

⁸ Works (Stedman and Woodberry), VIII, 251. This is from the article on L.A. Wilmer. Cp. "Of Criticism--Public and Private", VIII, 3-7; also "William Cullen Bryant", VIII, 105 ff. and "International Copyright", VII, 217-19.

⁹ "Nationality in American Letters", VII, 213-15: "There is not a more disgusting spectacle under the sun than our subserviency to British criticism...We know that in the few instances in which our writers have been treated with common decency in England, these writers have either openly paid homage to English institutions or have had lurking at the bottom of their hearts a secret principle at war with Democracy....We do indeed demand the nationality of self-respect. In Letters as in Government we require a Declaration of Independence. A better thing still would be a Declaration of War..."

¹⁰ "We throw off, with the most presumptuous and unmeaning hauteur, all deference whatsoever to foreign opinion--we forget, in the puerile inflation of vanity, that the world is the true theatre of the biblical histrio...and thus often find ourselves involved in the gross paradox of liking a stupid book the better because, sure enough, its stupidity is American." Works (Harrison), VIII, 277.

¹¹ See Works, VIII, 253: "It has become, indeed, the plain duty of each individual connected with our periodicals heartily to give whatever influence he possesses to the good cause of the integrity and the truth....We shall, thus, frown down all conspiracies to foist inanity upon the public consideration at the obvious expense of every man of talent who is not a member of a clique in power. We may even arrive, in time, at that desirable point from which a distinct view of our men of letters may be obtained, and their respective pretensions adjusted, by the standard of a rigorous and self-sustaining criticism alone."

all among them and the hallowing hand of death." But even among the living "Cooper owes much, Paulding all of his reputation as a novelist to his early occupation of the field."¹² Among the poets the usual rating is based on their poetic seniority.¹³ And so on.

This is not the place for a detailed examination of Poe's criticisms of American writers.¹⁴ These were subject to the exigencies of his existence as a magazinist, and are limited in their range. Had Poe been able to write his book, these might have formed the nucleus, but they would have been reconsidered, re-shaped, developed, modified and placed into a larger context, for Poe's book, it was announced (with perhaps an allusion to Griswold's sectionalism) was to "embrace the whole Union."¹⁵ Poe's limitations of temperament and background are obvious, but that his mind had a way of driving like a keen wedge into the heart of the matter is evident from his views upon American literature.

Poe had been ready to declare intellectual war on England. In 1845, George Putnam, a New York publisher, tried to pour oil

¹² "J.G.C. Brainard", Works, VIII, 262 f. Cp. "Fitz-Greene Halleck", Works, VIII, 51.

¹³ "Fitz-Greene Halleck", Works, VIII, 50 f. The usual order: Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Sprague, Longfellow, Willis, and so on. ... "Those rank first who were first known."-- "For my own part, I should have it thus--Longfellow, Bryant, Halleck, Willis, Sprague, Dana; and estimating rather the poetic capacity than the poems actually accomplished, there are three or four comparatively unknown writers whom I would place in the series between Bryant and Halleck, while there are about a dozen whom I should assign a position between Willis and Sprague. Two dozen at least might find room between Sprague and Dana.... One or two poets, now in my mind's eye, I should have no hesitation in posting above even Mr. Longfellow--still not intending this as very extravagant praise."

¹⁴ For discussion of Poe's criticisms see Harold Eby, American Romantic Criticism 1815-1860 [Univ. of Washington diss. in ms. n.d.]

¹⁵ In a notice in the Philadelphia Saturday Courier of July 25, 1846; a similar statement was made by Hirst in his sketch of Poe in the Saturday Museum.--Killis Campbell in PMLA 34 (1919) 463 n.

on the troubled waters of Anglo-American relations¹⁶ with a bookful of American Facts, economic and cultural, including a business man's view of American literature.¹⁷ This book presents an

¹⁶ A picture of the economic situation by a railroad director of Massachusetts that gives the proper setting for such an attack as the Foreign Quarterly's in 1844, not only on American poetry but on American civilization, is quoted in Putnam's American Facts, pp. 221-23: American credit is boundless on the London Stock Exchange, American bills and stocks are good as gold, goods are taken in exchange for stocks; mushroom banks and houses are forced by British capital to hotbed growth. States newly created, their capital in forests, log cabins, and backwoodsmen embark--it is so easy to borrow--on extensive works of improvement; the fever is fanned by the great bank of Pennsylvania and indiscreet rulers at home. Then a great fire suddenly annihilates thirty million dollars in New York; specie is withdrawn from the country, panic follows. Merchants are required to send specie who have none. States which require but one link more to get some return for their outlay, are utterly discredited, their property rendered valueless. Great crash--wreck of banks, merchants, states; all who falter are called cheats, swindlers, knaves. America's tariff falls annually. The British merchant to sustain the home market sends to New York all that is unsaleable in England, draws away the little specie that is left and breaks down the home manufacture. The United States, disheartened and for the moment discredited, fall back on themselves. Cash duties are adopted--create a revenue, check excess from abroad. Wages and salaries are reduced. Spindle, loom, hammer, saw, plow, set in motion. The flour England will not take is consumed at home. Exports increase. Gold and silver return. Interest in great cities falls from 18% to 3%. Credit of the states and the Union revives. United States stock which was refused in England at par, is going there at 16% premium. Domestic produce rises, new factories are commenced on a firmer basis, new articles manufactured. In England loss of American trade resulted in overproduction, fall of prices, terrible deficiency in revenue. Dividends are lost, profits destroyed, operatives discharged, left to starve,--while the flour America offers for the debt is refused, furnaces are blown out, rival manufacturers created, branches of trade annihilated, property depressed in value, the Bank of England calls on Paris and Hamburg for money, and heavy income taxes are imposed, which barely save the country from bankruptcy. A large proportion of this is traceable to loss of American trade....In future England must not expect coarse manufactures of America, be content with selling luxuries, be cautious about breadstuffs. With caution, demand from the United States even more than opening of China, will revive her commerce.

¹⁷ Published by Wiley and Putnam, London and New York, 292 pages. The book is in two parts: the first, eleven chapters of "general sketches" of the geography, government, religion, education, literary and scientific institutions, literature, fine arts, society and manners; the second, documents, notes and statistics, most of them on economic topics; the last a "Parody on English Criticism".

interesting picture of British bitterness over an economic depression which was laid to the economic, cultural and moral worthlessness of the United States.¹⁸ Putnam's spirit is fraternal,¹⁹ but he cannot forbear reprinting the North American Review's reply to the Foreign Quarterly's review of Griswold's Poets.²⁰ Putnam's sketch of American literature is relatively unimportant. Its scope is encyclopaedic, its tone not unlike that of Griswold's survey in the Prose Writers. It contains some data on American libraries, book trade and similar items.²¹ The level of its critical comment is suggested by the remark about Longfellow, "He has as yet reached but the early prime of life, but that he thinks as well as studies, is indicated when he says--'Life is real! Life is earnest!'" and the rest of it.²²

¹⁸ Specific attacks on the United States cited are from a then new edition of Macculloch's Dictionary of Commerce (quoted American Facts, p. 20) and several in the Foreign Quarterly, particularly Forster's review of Griswold. The chief complaint was repudiation of debts by some states. Cp. Robert E. Spiller on Sidney Smith's attitude, American Literature I (1929), 9 ff.

¹⁹ "For my part, I have no reason to dislike Old England--the land of my forefathers, the progenitor of twelve millions of my countrymen. She has always treated me well, commercially; and when I come here, she receives me with her usual liberal hospitality. And it is a pity that two kindred nations should be bamboozled by book makers into unnatural antipathy. Sensible men on both sides know better--but here they need American Facts....It is almost useless to expect that such a book would be read just now. The Anti-American feeling is too strong. Our former best friends and well-wishers are now the most bitter against us." Introduction, pp. 22 f.

²⁰ See Foreign Quarterly (Jan. 1844). Poe supposed it to be by Dickens, Lowell told him it was by Forster; both agreed with Forster's conclusions. The tone, however, aroused Bowen and Felton to a quite readable prose satire, NAR 59 (July 1844), 1-44.

²¹ Chapter VI deals with book trade; VII sketches leading authors; VIII, theology and science. For libraries, see Chapter V: College libraries about 600,000 volumes all told, at least some 800,000 to 900,000 volumes in public collections, (p. 69). "In poetry, about 120 original works, and in fiction about the same number, were published chiefly between 1830 and 1842", (p. 78). Figures for bookmaking in the United States for about twelve years ending 1842 (p. 82). Statistics of English reprints of American books for about 10 years (p. 87).

²² P. 101.

The same year the American Whig Review,²³ with some reservations, published a brief but searching sketch of American literature from a Southerner's point of view. It sounds exactly like the Southern reviewer of Knapp and Kettell in 1831. As method advances, the essay opens, creative powers decay;²⁴ bad criticism, however, does not always imply good art. The function of criticism in a young literature is twofold: (1) to inspire it with a manly spirit and the love of noble models and (2) to keep it from mere imitation of other countries more advanced in literature. National literature depends on national greatness.

If a wise and a high spirit, forming solid and pure institutions, beget freedom, nationality and the love of glory, and, as their consequence, eminence in arms, the softer arts that adorn civic superiority will follow and shape a literature the proper and peculiar image of a people.

Towards all this hardly anything in the United States seems yet to tend.

Amidst uncertain institutions, and a heterogeneous population, we have mainly but a feeble and an imitative literature, that servilely copies everything from abroad, and then seriously pretends to call its secondary inanities, "American Literature".²⁵

The writer recognizes no school of American writing unless Jack Downing or Sam Slick "who degrade and vulgarize the tongue and taste of the country" are the models of a new and noble literature; then "the Ethiopian minstrels will create for us music, and the disciples of Jim Crow a Theatre of our own." Follows a brief, severe review: Eighteenth century prose writing he finds good, Franklin best, Jefferson least. Nineteenth century prose he finds

²³ American Whig Review 1 (June 1845), 575-80, "American Letters - Their Character and Advancement", by Il Secretario; according to Poole's Index: E.W. Johnson.

²⁴ The editor thinks Webster, Prescott, Bancroft are original, though he admits "our original prose-writers as yet bear no proportion at all to the crowd of weak imitators; and as to poetry and poets...who does not know that a National Poetic Literature was never yet built on fugitive pieces." P. 575.

²⁵ P. 575.

progressively imitative of English writing.²⁶ As for poetry--

Poets, you call ours, but where are the poems they have produced? It is not a strain of a hundred verses that even when good, makes a poet...Fugitive poems no more make the poet than portraits the painter.²⁷

Halleck, Longfellow and Bryant rise above the rest, yet not one of them comes to the height of Thomson, or Collins, or Gray, or Akenside, not to mention the great masters in English or other tongues.²⁸ He closes with a diatribe against female literature, "The habits, the very organization of the softer sex forbid excellence in it"; poetry in all its nobler forms is most strenuous and manly.²⁹

The next year Margaret Fuller published an essay on "American Literature".³⁰ Her world-picture is one of progress towards a brilliant future. From the viewpoint of literature, there are still three classes: the people, the geniuses or poets, and in between the teachers or critics, the interpreters of genius to the people. But just as she is looking forward to a world in

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- ²⁶ Pp. 576-7. Salmagundi school entirely imitators of English essayists. Irving at best the closest copyist of Mackenzie and Goldsmith, otherwise a failure. Cooper confessedly the pupil of Scott.... "these were our leading authors when this notion [of an American literature] began." Channing since, and Prescott are, if anything less American, less not English. Ibid.
- ²⁷ He surveys American verse from Anne Bradstreet down to the Revolution... "Then followed the Pierponts, the Spragues, the Percivals and others of about twenty years since--feeble and loose imitators of Pope, Dryden, Spenser, Cowley, Gray. Of them it is enough to say that they wrote mostly neither from nature or art." P. 577 f.
- ²⁸ Bryant's "effusions" he finds "rather poetic gleams than poetry". As for "Thanatopsis"--"Nothing can be more ridiculous than a short poem in blank verse. Its stateliness, its solemn cadences, its majestic glow and force imply grandeur and continuity of subject, and make it fit for heroic use alone." P. 579.
- ²⁹ Still there is some comfort. "Verse is getting into a disrepute which delights us... Shortly, we trust to see it abandoned to tailors and man-milliners.... and employed to popularize... patent blacking, hoarhound candy, and quack medicines." P. 580.
- ³⁰ First published in Papers on Literature and Art, 2 vols., New York, 1846. Edited by her brother, Arthur, as Art, Literature and the Drama in 1859. My references are to the edition of 1889.

which there will be no lower classes,³¹ so likewise she is forecasting a world in which there will be no need of poets, because all are poets.³² The path to progress is the American way. "Milton", she agrees with Griswold (or he with her?) "Is more emphatically American than any author who lived in the United States."³³ American literature, a literature expressive of the American spirit and scene, is altogether in the future. She has no disdain for American writers who imitate Europe, provided that is their metier; they perform a useful service during a cultural transition.³⁴ But no matter how many books they make, they are not creating a national literature.³⁵ That an American genius "wide and full as our rivers, flowery, luxuriant, and impassioned as our vast prairies, rooted in strength as the rocks on which the Puritan fathers landed," will rise and work, is a matter of faith

³¹ "The wave rolls forward slowly and may be as long in retreating, but when it has retired into the eternal deep it will leave behind it a refreshed world; in which there still may be many low and mean men; but no lower classes, for it will be understood that it is the glory of a man to labor, and that all kinds of labor have their poetry." - "Prince's Poems", op. cit. p. 186.

³² "All the poets are the priests of Nature, though the greatest are also the prophets of the manhood of man. For when fully grown, the life of man must be all poetry; each of his thoughts will be a key to the treasures of the universe; each of his acts a revelation of beauty, his language will be music, and his habitual presence will overflow with more energy and inspire with a nobler rapture than do the fullest strains of lyric poetry now. Meanwhile we need poets; men more awakened to the wonders of life and gifted more or less with a power to express what they see..." Review of Longfellow's Poems, op. cit. p. 327.

³³ Op. cit. p. 48, in her review of Griswold's edition of the Prose Works of John Milton; "He [Milton] is so," she adds, "because in him is expressed much of the primitive vitality of the thought from which America is born....He is one of the Fathers of this Age, of that new Idea which agitates the sleep of Europe, and of which America, if awake to the design of Heaven and her own duty, would become the principal exponent. But the Father is still far behind the understanding of his child." Ibid. pp. 48 f.

³⁴ P. 298. "American Literature".

³⁵ "Books which imitate or represent the thoughts and life of Europe do not constitute an American literature. Before such can exist, an original idea must animate this nation..." Ibid.

with her; evidence of the things hoped for she finds in a growing interest in social reform and in a growing sense of the need of sincerity.³⁶ But much must change before there can be a national literature, the expression of an American genius; the frontier must go, population and mechanical civilization must spread over the country, and leisure and a yearning soul give birth to national ideas creating their own forms.³⁷ Without such ideas all attempts to construct a national literature must end like Frankenstein, in failure. The kind of books of which the new world will be full is Judd's Margaret; Cornelius Mathews, too, in his poems on Man in the Republic, though deficient in plastic powers, is finding the American way.³⁸ The review of American writers is brief.³⁹ W.E. Channing with his idea of the dignity of human nature "stands as godfather at the baptism of this country." Emerson with his wide range of literary culture and refined observation, is a "harbinger of a better day." Irving is safe in his niche; Cooper, Miss Sedgwick and Mrs. Kirkland are recorders of fleeting subjects. C.B. Brown is "great as ever human writer was in showing the self-sustaining force of which a lonely mind is capable." Prescott lacks great leading views and insight into the spirit of an era. Poetry is poor, and has not the excuse of fiction (competition with cheap publication on a great scale); too

³⁶ Pp. 299 f.

³⁷ "That day will not rise till the fusion of races among us is more complete. It will not rise till the nation shall attain sufficient moral and intellectual dignity to prize moral and intellectual no less highly than political freedom, not till, the physical resources of the country being explored, all its regions studded with towns, broken by the plow, netted together by railways and telegraph lines, talent shall be left at leisure to turn its energies upon the higher department of man's existence. Nor then shall it be seen till from the leisurely and yearning soul of that ripper time national ideas shall take birth, ideas craving to be clothed in a thousand fresh and original forms." Ibid.

³⁸ Pp. 313, 309 f.

³⁹ Pp. 304-10.

much of it is simply magazine verse. (She holds no brief for fugitive poetry). Among the poets, she puts Bryant first, limited but excellent. Philosophical poetry is not the truest kind, or Emerson would rank highest. Channing's nephew has more inspiration than artistic skill. Halleck and Willis are society poets. Dana would be lost anywhere else than in America. Longfellow is artificial and imitative, but not mechanical. Lowell is no genuine poet at all.⁴⁰ He paid her out for this in his Fable for Critics.

Lowell's Fable for Critics, which appeared anonymously in 1848,⁴¹ is the most celebrated of American verse satires upon American writers⁴² and, in selections, the best known sketch of American literature before the Civil War. It is a sort of vaudeville review of living American writers at the court of Phoebus Apollo. A brief summary may serve to show Lowell's revenge on Margaret Fuller⁴³ as well as his responses to Griswold and to

⁴⁰ "We cannot say as much [as for Longfellow] for Lowell, who, we must declare it, though to the grief of some friends and the disgust of more, is absolutely wanting in the true spirit and tone of poesy...his great facility at versification has enabled him to fill the ear with a copious stream of pleasant sound. But his verse is stereotyped; his thought sounds no depth, and posterity will not remember him." P. 308.

⁴¹ J.R. Lowell, Poems, III, 1-96 [in Riverside Edition of Writings, IX (1892)]. For the genesis of the Fable, see Lowell's Letters, ed. C.E. Norton, 2 vols. (1894), beginning November 13, 1847, especially letters to C.F. Briggs, who saw the Fable through the press and whom Lowell presented with the copyright. Cp. Griswold's Correspondence, p. 240.

⁴² For other American verse satires, see supra, pp. 40 f.; 61 n. 22. In 1838 appeared Laughton Osborne's Vision of Rubeta, an attack on Colonel William Leete Stone; in 1841 L.A. Wilmer's Quacks of Helicon, and after Griswold's gilded Poets in 1842, a mock "Recantation" in 1843. The Vision and the Quacks are both favorably reviewed by Poe.

⁴³ Lowell at first thought his revenge would be by writing better rather than writing about Margaret Fuller; but he wrote about her, and not only a few lines, as his wife, who had formerly been of the circle of Margaret Fuller's admirers, had advised; on the eve of publication, he wanted to cut out the following lines but did not:

"There is one thing she owns in her own single right,
It is native and genuine--namely, her spite;
Though, when acting as censor, she privately blows
A censor of vanity 'neath her own nose."

"Young America". Apollo has just sent a bookworm into the garden for a lily and is himself filing sonnets, when up walks Mr. D[uyckinck], followed by a small man in glasses [Cornelius Mathews], and asks Apollo [Lowell] to review a book for the Democratic Review. Lowell-Apollo says it is the forty-fourth copy D. has brought him, remarks that the British Museum's wanting one copy of each book printed in America is quite a help to American authors, and for his part proposes to confine criminals "to grow wiser and cooler At hard labor for life on the works of Miss [Fuller]." But here comes Griswold with his flocks of "swans".⁴⁴ Then the review.⁴⁵ Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, Brownson, Willis,

⁴³ [Cont.] He later regretted his treatment of Bryant. His letter to Poe on June 27, 1844, about the Foreign Quarterly review of Griswold suggests that Lowell was jealous of Longfellow and possibly planned something like the Fable as early as 1844: "Forster is a friend of some of the Longfellow clique here which perhaps accounts for his putting L. at the top of our Parnassus. These kinds of arrangements do very well, however, for the present...." Quoted in Griswold's Correspondence, p. 151.

⁴⁴ "But stay, here comes Tityrus Griswold, and leads on
The flocks whom he first plucks alive, and then feeds on
A loud-cackling swarm, in whose feathers warm-drest,
He goes for as perfect a - swan as the rest."

⁴⁵ Emerson a Yankee with a Greek head, his Concord neighbor Thoreau robbing his orchard and offering Emerson his own apples; Alcott whose talk is great but whose writing is dead, Brownson proving that it is the earth, not himself that turns round, Willis the cockney incarnate, Parker for all his learning "a preacher who smacks of the field and the street", Bryant the iceberg, Whittier mixing up excitement with inspiration, Dana the fusser, John Neal--"could he only have waited he might have been great"--Hawthorne a perfect man with a little woman clay mixed in, Dwight made the same way with a little music in addition, Cooper copying over and over the one wild flower he contributed to the figures of world literature and preaching to the American mob. The second round: Miranda, who, herself and alone, introduced German writers to America (a hit at "Preface" to her Papers on Literature and Art), Briggs hardboiled but tender-hearted, Poe "three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge" in whose works "quite the best in their kind...the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind;" Longfellow (not directly characterized: Evangeline pure art, Theocritus would hardly have changed a line), Mrs. Childs, childlike and sympathetic, Irving a "choice nature" neither wholly English nor Yankee, Judd whose "Margaret" reveals the soul of Down East and gives a foretaste "of the day that comes slowly to make all things new", Holmes matchless for wit, Lowell loaded down with isms, Halleck better than all he has written.

Parker, Bryant, Whittier, Dana, Neal, Hawthorne, Dwight, Cooper-- here Phoebus-Lowell is unable to refrain from lecturing his audience on nationality in literature; his hope is that by being themselves and letting Europe alone, the Americans may "become my new race of more practical Greeks",⁴⁶ though so far they have achieved resemblance only in slave-holding. A hotheaded gentleman demurs, but is frowned down by Phoebus Apollo, whose lordly air deserts him, however, the moment he sees Miranda [Fuller] coming; he looks for a hiding place in vain. She corners a flock of victims--the recorder digresses on bores. Apollo continues the review: "Harry Franco" Briggs, Poe, Longfellow [indirectly, by way of a lecture to Poe and Mathews on flinging mudballs], "Philothea" Childs, Irving, the author of "Margaret", the first real Yankee book--the recorder responds with a burst of emotion over Massachusetts, rather coldly received by Apollo, who continues reviewing: Holmes, Lowell himself, Halleck; but when he sees "The American Bulwers, Disraelis and Scotts" coming thick and fast as though for a mass meeting, he mocks at length at the profusion of great poets produced by free institutions.⁴⁷ With sophomoric smartness and insipid puns⁴⁸ he describes an average

46 "Your literature suits each whisper and motion
To what will be thought of it over the ocean

Forget Europe wholly, your veins throb with blood
To which the dull current in hers is but mud.

Plough, sail, forge, build, carve, paint, make all over new
To your own New-World instincts contrive to be true."

47 "Why there's scarcely a huddle of loghuts and shanties
That has not brought forth its own Miltons and Dantes;
I myself know ten Byrons, one Coleridge, three Shelleys

One (but that one is plenty) American Dickens."
[Cornelius Mathews again].

48 E.g. "There the babe that's unborn is supplied with a berth
There men without legs get their six feet of earth.

And so forth and so forth and so forth and so on
With this kind of stuff one might endlessly go on."

American graveyard full of patriots, when the critic returns with a thistle for a lily (as if it had been a book to review), and Apollo muses on the happier days when poets were poets and not pestered by critics who review because they can't write. Miranda says--but Apollo seizes his gloves, cane and hat, and runs, and so does the recorder.

The fact that Lowell's Fable for Critics was a popular success⁴⁹ suggests that by the end of the forties interest in the discussion of American literature was well established. During the fifties that interest continued unabated. An able book by an English critic about a dozen American writers then living was brought out in New York in 1850,⁵⁰ and Philarete Chasles' stimulating if journalistic Etudes sur la Litterature et les Moeurs des Anglo-Américains au XIX Siecle appeared in an American translation in 1852.⁵¹ The same year George Ripley gave a very brief account of American Literature in a striking essay on "Literature" which

⁴⁹ See Lowell's Letters, II, 334.

⁵⁰ Thomas Powell, The Living Authors of America. First Series, New York, Stringer and Townsend, 1850 (Cooper, Emerson, Willis, Poe, Longfellow, Prescott, Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Frances Osgood, Margaret Fuller, Mrs. Kirkland, Jared Sparks).

⁵¹ Anglo-American Literature and Manners...New York, Scribner, 1852. Translation, somewhat abridged by Donald McLeod. Chasles' book is a collection of essays he had contributed to French periodicals since 1835. He set himself an interesting problem: why American literature lacked imagination; and suggested this answer: imagination is constructive memory--America lacks memory. He is especially interested in Crèvecoeur, Gouverneur Morris in France, Audubon, Melville. Typee and Omoo are real travel books by a go-ahead, real American who gives a true picture of South Seas; but when he essays imaginative writing, as in Mardi, the result is a colossal machine, like the gigantic panorama of America in J.R. Smith, covering four miles of canvass, representing nearly 4000 miles of American landscape. For a translation of a French review by Hipolyte Babou of Chasles' book see International Monthly 4 (1851), 165-9; for an American review (a poor one) SQR 23 (April 1853) 380-421.--For French attitudes toward American literature see Harold E. Mantz, French Criticism of American Literature Before 1850, New York, Columbia University Press, 1917. The only important one besides Chasles is Alexis DeTocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II, (1840).

he wrote for the Handbook of Literature and the Fine Arts,⁵² and H.T. Tuckerman contributed a fifty-page sketch of American literature to a new American edition of Thomas B. Shaw's textbook, Outlines of English Literature.⁵³ The same year, again, appeared a book about Homes of American Authors, in which the interest in American writers took a form most characteristic of the age;⁵⁴ and, finally, the actor-manager F.C. Wemyss celebrated what could no longer be regarded as the centennial of the American theater with the publication of his Chronology of the American Stage from 1752 to 1852.⁵⁵ By 1854 Allibone's Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors began to appear; the

⁵² The article on "Literature", covering 25 two-column pages, surveys I Ancient Literature (Chinese, Greek, Hebrew, Roman, Sanscrit), II Modern Literature (Arabic, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Scandinavian, Russian, Polish, English, American). The discussion of American Literature covers not quite three columns, (pp. 379 f.) finds it almost exclusively in the 19th century--present generation has witnessed the growth of a national literature, if not peculiarly American in language, at least in style and the materials it has chosen. Among the most eminent living authors is Melville for Omoo, Typee, White Jacket.

⁵³ See infra, pp. 112 f.

⁵⁴ Homes of American Authors; comprising Anecdotal, Personal and Descriptive Sketches by Various Writers, Illustrated with Views of their Residences...New York, Putnam, 1852, 1853, 1854 etc. The authors are Audubon, Paulding, Irving, Bryant, Bancroft, Dana, Prescott, Miss Sedgewick, Cooper, Edward Everett, Emerson, Simms, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Webster, Kennedy, Lowell. (Contributors: G.W. Curtis, H.T. Tuckerman, G.W. Greene, C.F. Briggs, G.F. Hillard, W.C. Bryant, G.W. Peck, R.W. Griswold, Parke Godwin, E.E. Hale, Mrs. Kirkland). After the Civil War histories of American literature are decorated with the homes of authors.

⁵⁵ Wemyss' Chronology...New York, Taylor [c. 1852] includes: A list of all the theatres in the United States [should be "first" theatres, or "first regular" or "first brick" or "first circus", etc.], Names of all the Managers, and (pp. 19-171) List of Performers--alphabetically arranged with brief sketches; A List of All the Theatres [other than the first] (pp. 172-7); A List of Theatres...Destroyed by Fire (pp. 178 f.), All the managers...their locations (p. 180).--Likewise by F.C. Wemyss, Theatrical Biography of Eminent Actors and Authors, compiled from the Standard and Minor Drama, New York, Taylor [n.d.], and The Guide to the Stage...New York, Roorbach, 1859.

first volume was complete in 1858.⁵⁶ That a German scholar compiled a sketch and reader of American literature in 1854 was unimportant to the United States,⁵⁷ but the Bibliographical Guide to American Literature by Nikolaus Trübner, which appeared first in 1855, considerably enlarged in 1859, was recognized at once as a valuable contribution.⁵⁸ Late in 1855 came the Duyckinck

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- ⁵⁶ S. Austin Allibone, a Philadelphia merchant of Huguenot and Quaker stock who joined the Protestant Episcopal Church and became a leader in the Sunday School movement, found his life work in the compilation of a so-called Critical Dictionary of English Literature, which included American as well as British writers. It was copyrighted in 1854, had reached the end of "C" in 1855, and laid claim by reason of its index, to consideration as a manual according to a review in Putnam's 7 (Feb. 1856), 214 f. Cp. Vol. III, Last Word "Concerning Index: To be affixed to all editions of this Dictionary", signed Philadelphia, December 31, 1870. Vol. I appeared in 1858, Vols. II and III in 1871. For a brief analysis of Allibone's Contribution to American literary history see *infra*, pp. 128 f.
- ⁵⁷ F.C.L. Herrig [founder of Herrig's Archiv (1849-)], Handbuch der nordamerikanischen Nationalliteratur, Braunschweig, 1854. There are two sections: the first, an essay of 120 pages on the "Origin and Progress of Anglo-American Literature" [thus on the English title-page], the second, "Select Specimens" from 22 poets, 19 orators, 5 historians, 16 novelists, 9 miscellaneous writers. Herrig's conclusions about American literature (p. 119) are different from Allibone's: "America's literary publications--as the preceding sketch undoubtedly has shown--at present constitute an independent literature and command respect."
- ⁵⁸ Nikolaus Trübner, who became a famous international publisher, hailed from Heidelberg, worked at London for Longmans 1841-51, became interested in American books, made a tour of the United States and in 1855 published a thin volume, Trübner's Bibliographical Guide to American Literature (pp. XXXII, 108), the entire edition of which sold out in four months. Four years later, it appeared considerably enlarged: the introductory material covered 149 pages, the bibliography of 32 classed lists with an index, 554 pages. The introductory materials include 30 pages of "Bibliographical Prolegomena" by Trübner and Herman Ludewig, a German scholar in the United States; a 60 page sketch "Contributions towards a History of American Literature" by Benjamin Moran and 45 pages about "Public Libraries of the United States" by Edward Edwards, an expert in the British Museum. - Trübner's book was the best book on American literature before the Civil War. For a review by A.P. Peabody see NAR 92 (1861), 146-63. It gained recognition in Europe and America; Trübner was made an honorary member of many learned societies of the United States. - For Trübner and other bibliographers of American literature see Adolf Growoll, Book-trade Bibliography in the United States in the XIX Century, New York, 1898. Trübner's book is included here, because it contains Benjamin Moran's "Contributions". The first six chapters

Cyclopaedia of American Literature in two volumes, the most ambitious and comprehensive attempt in the field before the Civil War; Griswold tried hard to kill it. After Duyckinck, besides the final versions of Allibone's first volume and of Trübner, there were some half dozen scattered sketches of American literature which will be noticed later. Before Duyckinck there remains only Tuckerman's sketch for a brief analysis.

Tuckerman was well read, conscientious and conservative. He had published a number of books containing articles on American subjects, and quotes himself freely in this sketch.⁵⁹ He had read in the periodical literature⁶⁰ and collected bibliography on various subjects.⁶¹ His essay has three chapters. The first sketches American intellectual development; the second, belles lettres; the third, poetry. In the first--he has read DeTocqueville--he is searching for the features characteristic of the American mind. He finds oratory eminently the literature of republics,⁶² and thinks history best cultivated in a republic.⁶³

58 [Cont.] survey American literature in four periods: first and second colonial, first and second national; the second national spreads out into three chapters. The other six chapters (in 1854) deal with foreign writers (cp. Duyckinck) education, printing, remuneration of authors, the book trade and its extent, newspapers and periodicals. Three chapters are added in 1859, printing presses, typography and general remarks.

59 Thoughts on the Poets (1846) on poetry (p. 511) on Drake's "Culprit Fay" (pp. 516-9) and on Bryant (p. 530); Artistic Life, or Sketches of American Painters (1847) on Allston (p. 513); Characteristics of Literature, First Series (1849) on W.E. Channing (p. 482), Second Series (1851) on travel books (p. 505), George Baker (p. 521); [Leaves from the Diary of a Dreamer (1853) on Hawthorne (p. 509-10). My references are to the 1868 edn. of Shaw's Manual.]

60 He quotes for example the Boston Anthology, p. 497.

61 E.g. Local histories, p. 490 n. biography, ibid. Travel books, p. 504 n.

62 P. 484. Daniel Webster had just died; his writings--"may be deemed invaluable from the nationality of their tone and spirit." P. 487.

63 "Untrammelled by proscription, and unawed by political authority," the historian of American history has a remarkable opportunity. "There are relations...both to the past and future which render American history the most suggestive episode in

A literary feature quite as characteristic of the United States as those DeTocqueville had noted (journalism and schoolbooks) he finds in fireside literature.⁶⁴ In belles lettres "the literature of no country is more rich in books of travels"; the American, accustomed to pioneer conditions, is by nature locomotive.⁶⁵ Poetry in America is particularly difficult. "The poet, in this republic, does not address ignorance. In truth, the great obstacle with which he has to deal, so to speak, is intelligence."⁶⁶ Bryant is the best representative of American poetry.⁶⁷

⁶³ [Cont.] the annals of the world, and give it a universal as well as special dignity." P. 488.

⁶⁴ P. 483: "....domestic reading--a species of books intended for the family, and designed to teach science, religion, morality, the love of nature, and other desirable acquisitions. These works range from a juvenile to a mature scope and interest, both in form and spirit, but are equally free of all extravagance,--except it be purely imaginative,--and are unexceptionable, often elevated, in moral tone." In 1858 Appleton published A Household Book of American Poetry, edited by Charles A. Dana (a Southern reviewer missed "Home Sweet Home" in it).

⁶⁵ Pp. 504 f. He gives a long list of travelers, 504 n.

⁶⁶ P. 525: "The tendency of all action and feeling with us is so much the reverse of poetical, that only the high, sustained, and consistent development of the imagination would command attention or exert influence."

⁶⁷ He is appreciative of nearly all of the poets he reviews. In the eighteenth century, to be sure, he finds very little that is alive. But in the nineteenth, there is much to be thankful for; Dana, for example, is the most psychological of American poets, "Street" stimulates national feeling, the Scripture pieces of N.P. Willis are "choice and valuable examples of American genius," Longfellow "is the artistic, as Halleck is the lyrical, and Bryant the picturesque and philosophical, of American poets". He seems to prefer Halleck: "The more recent style of metrical writing, suggestive rather than emphatic, undefined and involved and mainly borrowed from German idealism he utterly repudiates. All his verses have a vital meaning, and the clear ring of pure metal." Poe he barely mentions (p. 521) Bryant he respects most profoundly; for him he has saved seven pages at the very end of his essay

